

SILVER PEAKS RIVER TRACK - Trampers Guide

*This track guide describes the **Silver Peaks River Track** in the Possum Hut to Yellow Spur direction.*

The most direct route to access the start of the Silver Peaks River Track is via the *Gold Miners Direct Track*, which starts immediately behind the Silver Peaks sign at the official starting point for the Silver Peaks track to Jubilee Hut on Semple Road (*misnamed on this map as Steep Hill Road*). After a short sidle following the contour, the track zigzags down a prominent ridge to a tributary of the South Waikouaiti. After crossing a small creek, the marked track intersects with the Eucalypt Spur track. Follow this down to the junction with the



Possum Hut Track.

The Eucalypt Spur track is accessed from near the start of the Green Ridge track - follow the main track under Hightop to the Swampy / Green Ridge junction (signposted), and head further up the track for three minutes. Again, look for a marked but un-signposted track on your right. The track down the spur is obvious and easy to follow. Good views can be had about quarter of the way down from a lookout rock.

From the bottom of Eucalypt Spur, the track crosses the main river, and remains on the western (true left) side of the South Waikouaiti until the final ascent to Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut. The track has been refined and re-

routed over time, and now follows an enjoyable contour as much as possible. The original steep sections are being replaced with zig-zags. Cats Teeth Creek, just beyond Rosella Ridge is reached after 90 minutes from the bottom of Eucalypt Spur.

Good travel from Cats Teeth Creek (in places on historic water races) to the unnamed creek before Yellow



Spur means this section takes approximately 20 minutes. This unnamed creek features a solid rock bed, a feature of the South Waikouaiti River.

From this final creek crossing the track sidles west and climbs to join with the existing Yellow Spur track, 15 minutes below Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut.

Total Time: Allow 3.0hrs to 3.5hrs for the entire tramp from Semple Road to Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut.

Most of the track junctions are signposted, which means when used in conjunction with this map that your progress and location can be easily ascertained.

The River Track is complete all the way from just below Possum Hut to Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut, but is continuously being improved to make for a more enjoyable tramping experience.

The River Track has enabled many combinations of 'round trips', either to the main Silver Peaks via Rosella and Hermit Ridge, or to Mountain Rd via the various access tracks from the River Track.



NOTES FOR TRAMPERS

Despite its closeness to Dunedin City, the Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve can experience very different weather. Conditions in the Silver Peaks can, and does deteriorate very quickly, meaning trampers have to be prepared for all weather conditions.

If you are venturing away from the main Silver Peaks Route (*Hightop-Jubilee-ABC-Phillip J Cox Hut-Tunnels Track*) then tramping experience and equipment is recommended.

Clothing: Multiple layers are recommended, along with a wind and waterproof layer. Also bring a warm hat and gloves.

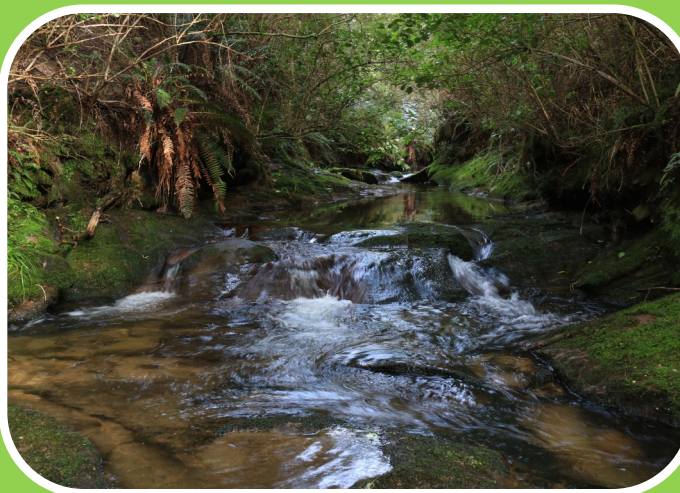
Footwear: Strong boots with gaiters are recommended - all Silver Peaks tracks can be muddy with sections that are steep and slippery.

Other gear: A first aid kit and a survival blanket are a good idea, even for a day trip. Carry enough food and water for your trip (there is no water available along the tops).

Communication: Good cell phone coverage is available between Semple Road and the top of the Devils Staircase (Silver Peak), along Rocky Ridge and down Yellow Ridge as far as Philip J Cox Memorial Hut. Cell phones **do not work** in any of the valleys (including Jubilee Hut). A PLB is recommended for all trips.



Silver Peaks River Track *Possum Hut to Yellow Spur*



The Silver Peaks River track on the western / true left side of the Waikouaiti River (South Branch) completes for the first time a true tramping circuit within the Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve. The 'official' Silver Peaks Route is a through trip only from Hightop to Mountain Road (Tunnels Track), meaning a 6km road walk.

The Silver Peaks River Track connects existing tracks just below Possum Hut, and links through to Yellow Spur, joining the existing track 10 to 15 minutes below Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut. While a basic track has been cut and marked, it should be treated as a tramping track, and requires tramping boots or strong footwear to traverse.

This new track now provides excellent two or three day circuit tramping options in the Silver Peaks Reserve, as well as providing a linking track to several routes leading down from Mountain Road (through the pine plantations), and to the ridges connecting to the tops of the Silver Peaks.

The OTMC and the wider tramping fraternity are indebted to **Arthur Blondell** and the **Green Hut Track Group** for the foresight and physical construction that has made this track possible.



Tramping Options using the Silver Peaks River Track

(refer to map on reverse)

3-Day Trip - Hightop - Pulpit Rock - Jubilee - ABC Cave - The Gap - Yellow Ridge - Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut - River Track - Hightop (moderate): *With two new huts, along with the new linking river track, it is now possible to enjoy a 3-day leisurely visit to the Silver Peaks. Jubilee Hut is popular at the weekends, and as of November 2020 requires bookings (available from DoC). This trip can be done in either direction.*

2-Day Trip - Hightop - Pulpit Rock - Jubilee - ABC Cave - The Gap - Yellow Ridge - Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut - River Track - Hightop (moderate): *Same as above, although ABC Cave, with its sleeping platform would make a better overnight stay (evens the days out). An alternative to dropping into Jubilee is to traverse Rocky Ridge, which features the best views in the Silver Peaks. This trip can also be completed in either direction.*

Day Trip - Hightop - Gold Miners Direct Track - River Track - Philip J Cox Memorial Hut - Yellow Ridge - Tunnels Track: *This is a pleasant moderate trip that will take around 6 hours. The 6km section of Mountain Road beyond the locked gate remains a challenge. Alternate options to avoid the road walk include returning back along the river track, wading up the South Waikouaiti itself (a pleasant summer trip) or head to Evansdale Glen via the Rongomai or Honeycomb Tracks.*

Day Trip - Hightop - Green Hut Site - Upper Green Ridge - Rosella Ridge - River Track - Hightop: *Rosella Ridge has been a regular tramping trip for the local tramping clubs - navigation once reaching the South Waikouaiti River has been a problem at times. With the new track this problem has now disappeared - to access Semple / Mountain Road you can choose any of the multiple routes available. A longer trip is to swap Rosella Ridge with Hermit Ridge, accessed from Rocky Ridge.*

Note: *The Department of Conservation maintain the main Silver Peaks Route only - most of the other tracks in the Silver Peaks are maintained by volunteers (primarily the Green Hut Track Group) - as a result they can be regarded as marked routes. The River Track is benched and signposted - others may be overgrown and hard to follow.*

The local guide book (Dunedin Tracks and Trails, Antony Hamel) has information on the Silver Peaks Tracks - this book is currently out of print, but an updated edition is currently being compiled (as at June 2022).

The Silver Peaks Tracks



Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve Walking Tracks & Routes

This map outlines the main tramping tracks and routes available within the Silver Peaks Scenic Reserve. With the addition of the River Track on the western side of the South Waikouaiti River there is now a true complete circuit of tramping tracks available in the Silver Peaks.

The standard Silver Peaks route starts near the bend on Semple Road to the north of Hightop, and follows the ridge past Green Hill to Pulpit Rock. From here the tracks traverse the highest parts of the Silver Peaks, before descending the 400m Devils Staircase (from Pt 777m) to Jubilee Hut (DoC - 10 Bunks - **prior bookings required year round**). From Jubilee, the track climbs to ABC Cave. After passing near The Gap on the reserve boundary, the track heads down Yellow Ridge to Philip J. Cox Memorial Hut (DoC - 4 Bunks). From here you have the option of following the origi-

nal route down Yellow Spur to the valley and up through the plantation via the Tunnels Track to Mountain Road (incorrectly labelled on this map as Steep Hill Rd). With the completion of the River Track, it is now possible to head back to Hightop via the South Waikouaiti valley, before linking up with the Walkers Rd (opposite Rosella Ridge), Hunters Access, Possum Hut Access Track, Gold Miners Direct Route or Eucalypt Spur Track.

Tracks and routes shown in **RED** are additional to those indicated on the published Topo50 Map. Tracks / Routes outside of the main Silver Peaks Route are generally signposted, and generally marked as required. As these tracks are maintained by voluntary labour, their condition and followability can not be guaranteed. Tramping experience and navigation ability is recommended.