

# DUNEDIN SKYLINE WALK

The concept of a walkway along the entire northern Dunedin Skyline from Flagstaff to Mt Cargill has been the vision of local trampers for many years. Now, the Skyline Walk is a reality, and the seven different sections offer a wide variety of tramping experiences.

Flagstaff and the Pineapple Track is perhaps the most popular section of the Skyline Walk, with many taking the opportunity for the stunning views of the city from the easily accessible summit of Flagstaff.



The route from Flagstaff to Swampy Summit is via a rough 4WD track, but easy to follow. The Swampy Ridge track itself leads to other tracks, which head into the Nichols Creek and Whare Flat catchments (check out Antony Hamel’s ‘Dunedin Tracks and Trails’ for more information on these.



From Swampy Summit, the Leith Saddle Track , main-



tained by the Department of Conservation, heads over a small knob with an old trig on it, and then drops down to the State Highway at Leith Saddle. The well formed and graded lower section has replaced a notoriously boggy section that dated from the 1980’s.

The Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club, in conjunction with the Dunedin City Council have developed the two sections of track leading from Sullivans Dam to Mt Cargill. The first section, the ‘Cloud Forests of Leith’, connects Sullivans Dam with the powerlines. This section is well developed, and features a unique form of board walk.



The second track developed by the OTMC and DCC is the Escarpment Track, on the northern flank of Pigeon Hill. This track is designed to provide a unique tramping experience, hence it is more suited to experienced trampers.

Both sections of track between Sullivans Dam and Mt Cargill were made possible by generous financial donations from Dick and Barbara Calvert, and Bob and Evelyn Entwistle. The OTMC and the DCC acknowledge these generous donations that has allowed walkers and trampers to today complete a full traverse of the Dunedin Skyline.

## Sections of the Dunedin Skyline Walk

(all sections can be walked independently, and in either direction)

**Flagstaff - Pineapple Track (DCC):** Leaving from the Bullring on Flagstaff-Whare Flat Rd, this section traverses over the summit of Flagstaff, with panoramic views over the city.

**Swampy Ridge Track (DCC):** This track connects the Pineapple Track to Swampy Summit, and formed part of the original mountain track route north of Dunedin - at 739m, Swampy Summit is the highest point on the entire Skyline Walk.

**Leith Saddle Track (DoC):** This track descends from near the communications installation at the southern end of Swampy Summit, and connects to the top of Waitati Valley Road, where it intersects with the State Highway at Leith Saddle.

**Cloud Forests of Leith (OTMC):** Leaving Sullivans Dam, the Cloud Forests of Leith winds through regenerating forest (including remnant cedar forest) and small creeks as it climbs to the view point over Blueskin Bay at the powerlines.

**Escarpment Track (OTMC):** This track is designed as a real tramping experience, where you will be walking and climbing over tree roots and occasional fallen native logs - there are three sections where you will need to climb small rock bluffs (with plenty of hand and footholds available). Experienced trampers will enjoy the expansive views over Blueskin Bay and towards the Silver Peaks.

**A.H. Reed Track (DCC):** This short track connects with the top of the Escarpment Track, and skirts under the northern side of Mt Cargill before heading to the summit. Mt Cargill offers 360° views from the summit.

**Mt Cargill and Organ Pipes Track (DCC)** The eastern end of the Skyline Walk heads back down the A.H. Reed track to the popular track to Bethunes Gully - to follow the Skyline Walk, turn off at the Organ Pipes junction and follow the track to Mt Cargill Road. An option from here is to follow the Grahams Bush (DoC) track to Sawyers Bay.

(for further information on the non-OTMC tracks look out for the local walks guidebook (Dunedin Tracks and Trails, by Antony Hamel), or check the information on the OTMC website - follow link below)



[www.otmc.nz/skylinewalk.html](http://www.otmc.nz/skylinewalk.html)

# NOTES FOR TRAMPERS

The section of the Skyline Walk between Sullivans Dam and Mt Cargill is managed and maintained with volunteer labour from Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club - the OTMC has put in place a management plan with the goal of keeping this unique track open and available for all to use.

The Escarpment Track in particular can be prone to windfall and other damage, especially during heavy snow or wind. The sections that are under the remaining large pine trees (in the vicinity of Pigeon Hill) should be avoided during strong winds.

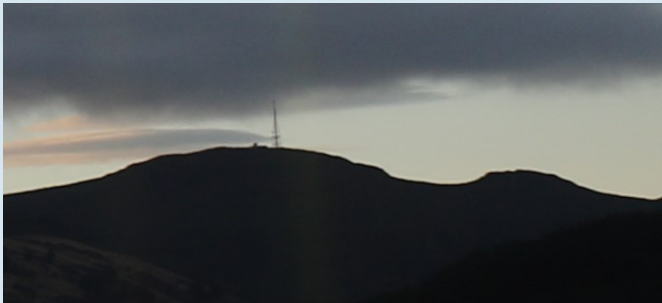
The OTMC is investigating extending the track from the Leith Lookout Loop to Pigeon Flat Road (this is more in line with the Skyline Walk concept). When this happens this brochure and the OTMC website will be updated.

The section of track from Sullivans Dam to the power lines is suitable for most trampers (some sections may get muddy in winter and following heavy rain) - strong walking shoes or tramping boots are recommended.

Tramping boots, and wind and rainproof clothing is recommended for the Escarpment Track. There is no water available en-route.

The track is well marked and, with determination, can be walked in most weather conditions. Good weather is required to really enjoy the extensive views from the Escarpment Track - enjoy using these tracks.

The club welcome any feedback - you can contact us via our website: [www.otmc.nz](http://www.otmc.nz)



## DUNEDIN SKYLINE WALK

### Sullivans Dam to Mt Cargill



The Dunedin Skyline Walk comprises several established walking tracks as it winds its way from Flagstaff to Mt Cargill along Dunedin city’s northern skyline. The Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club have developed the final two sections: *the ‘Cloud Forests Of Leith’*, from Sullivans Dam to the powerlines, and the *‘Escarpment Track’* between the powerlines and Mt Cargill.

The Cloud Forests Of Leith track (to the powerlines) is suitable for the average walker, while the Escarpment Track is for more experienced trampers.

The concept of the complete Dunedin Skyline Track is mentioned in A.H. Reed’s early writings, and is recognised in the DCC Track Policy and Strategy from 1998.

The OTMC sections of the Skyline Walk traverse land owned by the Dunedin City Council and the Department of Conservation.







**Track Description**  
**Cloud Forests Of Leith**  
**(Sullivan's Dam to Powerlines)**



Sullivan's Dam is accessed from Leith Valley Road - there is a carpark at the southern end of the dam. From here a good walking loop track can be followed to the upper end of the dam - look out for a sign that indicates the start of the Cloud Forests of Leith Track.

A feature of the Cloud Forests of Leith track is that it winds its way through regenerating bush as it follows a small stream, which is crossed safely at several crossing points.

**5** 15 minutes from Sullivan's Dam the track drops into 'Calvert Dell' complete with a small waterfall - this area is named after the track's main benefactors, Dick and Barbara Calvert.

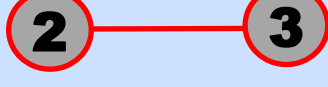
Not far from Calvert Dell the track reaches a junction - from here the Leith Loop track climbs to a prominent rock outcrop overlooking Sullivan's Dam. Future plans may see the track extended from here to link up with Pigeon Flat Road and the Leith Saddle Walkway.

The Leith Loop option takes about 45 minutes return from the junction, and offers the best views from the city side of the Cloud Forests of Leith track.

Continuing from the Leith Loop junction, the track climbs steadily upwards to the open area and the powerlines. Views from here overlook Waitati Valley, Blueskin Bay and Warrington, and through to Double Hill and the Silver Peaks.

The Clouds Forests of Leith Track to the powerlines is suitable for all moderately graded walkers and trampers - the track has boardwalk where required, but also has some areas that can become muddy when wet.

**Track Description**  
**Escarpment Track**  
**(Powerlines to Pigeon Hill)**



The Escarpment Track is built to a basic track standard, but is well marked. The track starts from the powerlines at the end of the Cloud Forests of Leith Track. Alternatively, the track can be accessed via the 3 Peaks track and then by following 4WD tracks under the powerlines.

This section also winds through the bush, and is muddy in parts - signage indicates where the historic Sullivan's Bridle track crosses - the OTMC hope to re-establish access from here back to the 3 Peaks track.

After crossing a wire fence, the track climbs up to a large rocky outcrop to a great lookout point (known locally as Pigeon Rock) with extensive views towards

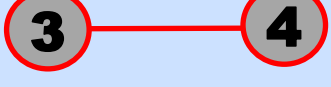


Swampy Summit and the Silver Peak Scenic Reserve.

From here the track winds through remnant pine forest (beware of windfall in strong winds), and climbs to the ridgeline at Pigeon Hill (the track here is marked with standard orange triangles as well as warratah marker poles).

From Pigeon Hill there is an informal route through the City Forest area to a small patch of bush on DoC land - there is a track through the DoC area (marked with triangles and poles) that leads to Cowan Road - this option is an alternate option to the remainder of the Escarpment Track. Take care in fog or misty conditions as the route is not officially marked across the City Forest land.

**Track Description**  
**Escarpment Track**  
**(Pigeon Hill to Mt Cargill)**



The section of the Escarpment Track from Pigeon Hill to Cowan Rd (near Mt Cargill) is suited to experienced trampers, and sturdy tramping boots are recommended!

From Pigeon Hill (marked as number 3 on the above map), the route drops sharply down through remaining pine forest before linking up with the native bush below.

The track is currently both well cut and marked (2016), but does require care as you traverse over many exposed tree roots and larger logs - you will be watching your feet as you hold on to the trees!

The best views on the entire track from Sullivan's Dam to Mt Cargill are had on this section of the track, so take your time to enjoy the ever changing views.

A final climb up a moderate rocky outcrop leads to a gentle sidle to the second fence and onward to Cowan Road.

A short walk up Cowan Rd leads to the A.H. Reed Track, a nice way to complete the climb to Mt Cargill (676m), with its popular 360° views from the summit.



An alternative route to return to Sullivan's Dam is to use the 3 Peaks Tracks - from Mt Cargill head down Cowan road to the dog-leg beyond the cattle stop and look out for the track on your right between the two bends in the road (marked on map above).