

## Track classification

**Walking track:** Easy to moderate walking from a few minutes to a day. Mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities. Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged. Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots required.

**Tramping track:** Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking. Mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections. Suitable for people with good fitness, moderate to high level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills. Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect river crossings. Tramping/hiking boots required.

## Enjoying the outdoors safely

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

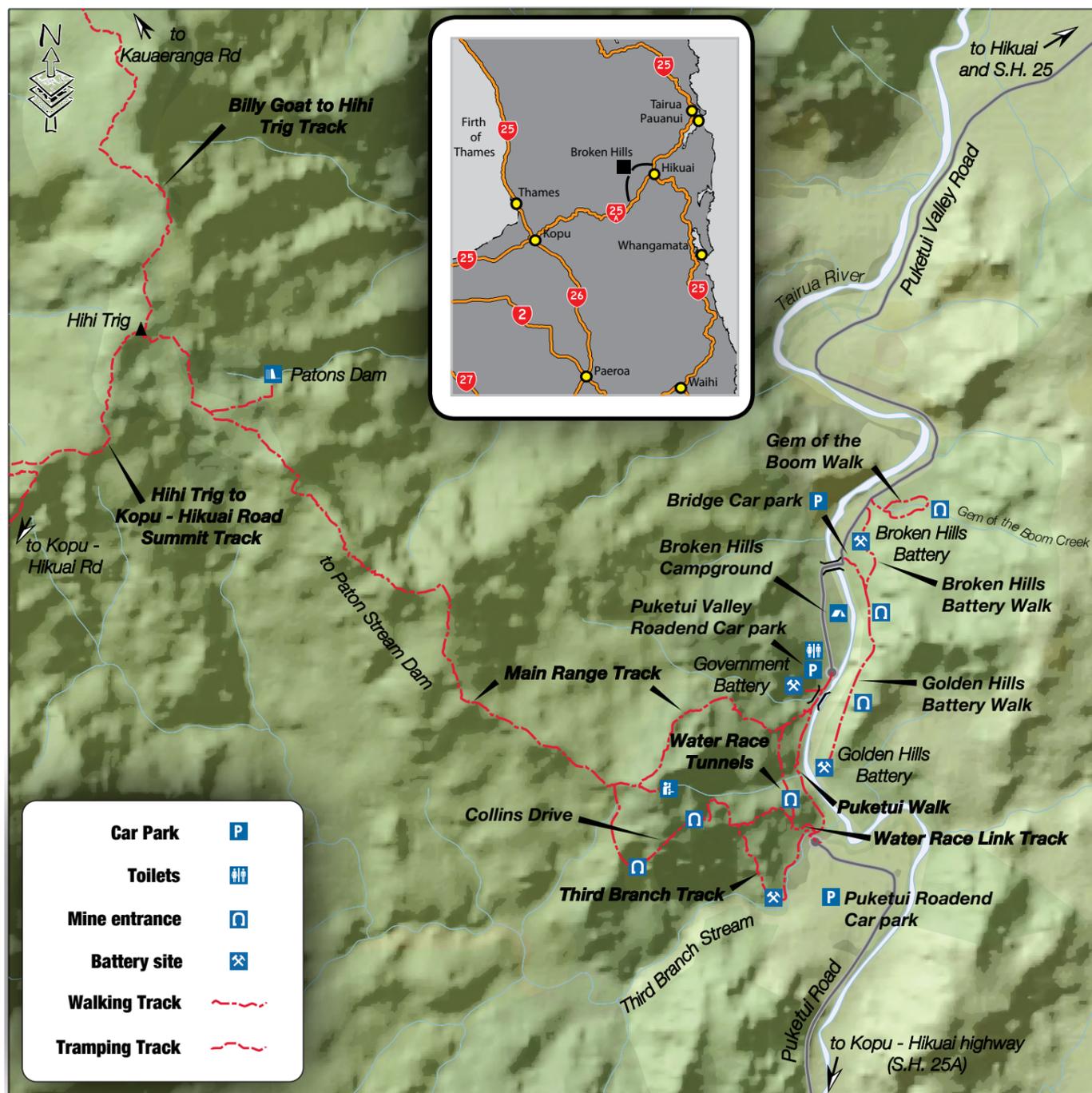
Choose the type of track that best suits the skills and abilities of your group. Be well prepared for all types of weather and conditions. Have a first aid kit and survival kit and know what to do if things go wrong. Safety is your responsibility.

Check water levels before attempting to cross streams or rivers. Learn safe crossing methods.

Track times are based on an average family group. They are a guide only and may vary depending on the weather and track conditions.

### Warning

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



Remains of the foundations of Broken Hills Battery. Photo: DOC.

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

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 1930s Depression. Only a flat concrete foundation remains visible today. Further up the walking track you'll find a small waterfall and pool—an ideal place to cool down on a hot day.

**Puketui Walk** (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. Off this track, a number of circular track options are available.

**Water Race Tunnels Track** (1.9 km loop)

Take the Main Range Track off the Puketui Walk and veer left onto the Water Race Tunnels Track. This 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.

**Third Branch Track** (1.3 km loop)

At the southern end of the Puketui Walk, the Third Branch Track follows the stream then picks up an old tram line, 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 Puketui Walk.

**Collins Drive Loop** (3.5 km circuit, 2-3 hr return from road end car parks).

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.

**Main Range Track**

This starts out as a walking track from the northern end of 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 Paton Stream Dam (another 3 hr), Hihi Trig (4.5 hr) or down into the Kauaeranga Valley (8-10 hr).

Please note that the track changes to a tramping track at the junction and is not well formed and steep in places, so is more suited to experienced and well-prepared trampers.

## Track guide

**Golden Hills Battery Walk** (800 m, 30 min 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** (550 m, 20 min)

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 (at 2011 bullion prices) around NZ\$100 million! Sixty people were employed 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 Golden Hills Battery.



Remains of the concrete foundations that supported cyanide vats, Golden Hills Battery. Photo: DOC.



(Left) Tōwai—close-up of flowers. Photo: Terry Greene. (Right) Fivefinger. Photo: Dave Crouchley.