



Breast Hill Track

 Walking

Difficulty

Hard

Length

51.5 km

Journey Time

3-4 days

Region

Otago

Sub-Region

Queenstown-Lakes District

Part of Collections

Te Araroa - New Zealand's Trail , Te Araroa - South Island

Track maintained by

Te Araroa Trail Trust [↗](#)

The track begins on a public access easement across Longslip Station, a run established by pastoral lease in 1858 and which once comprised 42526ha. In the 1880s the property was overrun by rabbits and abandoned. In 1897 Lake Hāwea and Ben Avon Stations were subdivided off and what remained of Long Slip Station then passed through a succession of lessees before going through tenure review, a process that concluded in 2008.

Access over the final 18km of this track became available when Lake Hāwea Station completed tenure review during 2010. This property has been owned by the Rowley family since 1912. Like Longslip Station, Lake Hāwea Station still operates as a working farm.

Birchwood Carpark to Top Timaru Hut - 22.8km / 7-8hr

A marked route leads off from the carpark and follows a fence line towards the Avon Burn. Ford the burn then climb to the farm track above the true right bank. Turn right here and head upstream on the farm track as it climbs into the Avon Burn catchment towards Mt Martha Saddle (1680m).

Beyond the saddle Te Araroa descends on an unmarked bulldozer track to Top Timaru Hut (6 bunks). The track is occasionally washed out but travel is still straightforward. The route remains on the true left of the Timaru River all the way down to the hut.

Top Timaru Hut to Timaru River Junction - 12km / 5-6hr

The bulldozed track on the river's true left continues downstream to the tree line, which is about a 20 minute walk away. Once in the forest progress is slower on a marked track that climbs, descends, and sidles through this steep sided river valley. This is to the Breast Hill Track/Timaru River Track junction. Along the way the track is on the true left for about 2.5km then emerges from the forest at a grassy area. From here the track leads down to the first of about a dozen river crossings. These are straightforward in normal flow.

Timaru River Junction to Stodys Hut - 2.2km / 1.5-2hr

The track from the junction climbs steeply to the tree line then sidles across an open section. The track then returns briefly to the forest before reaching Stodys Hut (6 bunks), an old musterers' hut right on the tree line. The hut has a dirt floor but was restored to reasonable condition in 2010. Water is available from the nearby creek, the last reliable water source until Pakituhi Hut.

Stodys Hut to Pakituhi Hut via Breast Hill - 11.2km / 3.5 - 4.5hr

The route between the huts is high and exposed but, from Breast Hill, has views over Lake Hāwea and beyond to the Alps, including Mt Aspiring. It is a Te Araroa highlight.

From Stodys Hut Te Araroa follows an old farm track up to the ridgeline then turns right and follows the farm track along the broad ridge as it undulates towards the Breast Hill summit (1578m). The track is lightly marked but all junctions are signposted so navigation is not usually difficult. Beyond the summit the track is close to a fence line and mostly unformed. It descends to the 8-bunk Pakituhi Hut (1300m) which is 200m along a side trail to the left.

The hut can also be accessed along a foul weather route, which departs Te Araroa on the left a little over 1km before it reaches the summit. This alternative route is less exposed but lacks the drama the Breast Hill route affords.

Pakituhi Hut to Gladstone Reserve - 5.1km / 3-4hr

There are no streams en route so carry plenty of water from the hut.

This challenging section descends 950m to the Timaru River Rd, initially along the ridgeline to a small saddle and then down a steep face on a zig-zagging track. Turn left at the road. The Gladstone Reserve is lakeside and about 1km distant.

- Note: Allow more time if walking this section in the opposite direction.

Conditions:

Potential hazards:

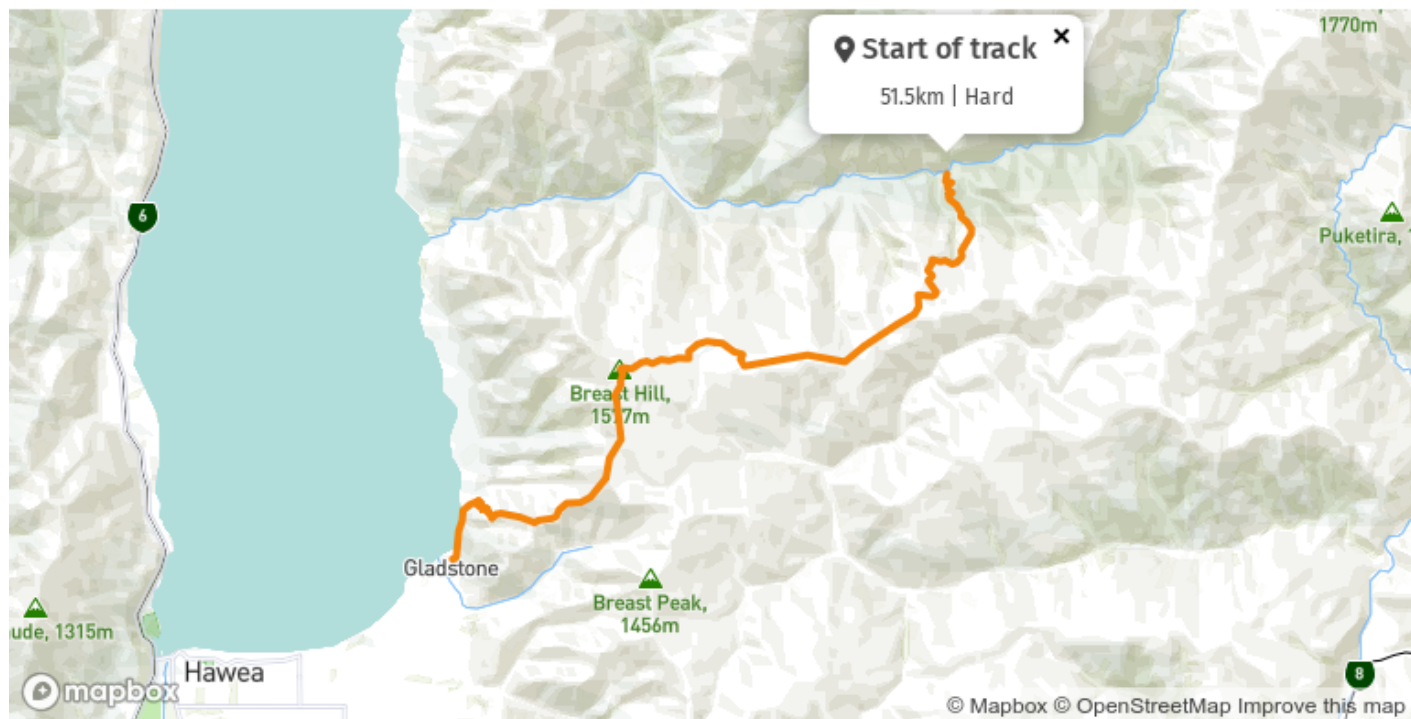
- Farming operations at both ends
- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers
- Track exposed to sun, wind or cold
- Weather extremes
- Few water sources in places

How to get here


Northern Start: Birchwood Road carpark, Ahuriri Valley

Southern End: Gladstone Reserve, Lake Hāwea

Track Elevation and Map



More information

[Te Araroa Otago trail notes, including information about accommodation, transport and resupplying](#) 

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