

# Gold fossicking in the Glenhope Scenic Reserve

## Louis Creek and New Creek gold fossicking areas

Sections of Louis Creek have 'gold fossicking area' status designated under the Crown Minerals Act 1991. The lower section of the fossicking area is on land owned by Tasman District Council; the upper section is within the Glenhope Scenic Reserve. The section of Louis Creek between these areas is private land – no fossicking is permitted, but it can be used for access between the two designated fossicking areas.

### Things to remember



All native plants and animals within the reserve are protected. Do not harm or remove them.



Dogs are allowed by permit only – see [doc.govt.nz/dogaccess](http://doc.govt.nz/dogaccess)



Historic tailings remind us of our past. Do not disturb them.

- ▶ Keep your activity to the creek bed.
- ▶ Use only non-mechanised hand tools. Sluice boxes must not exceed 1.5 m in length.
- ▶ No fossicking on private land. Access to fossicking areas is across private land – respect the farm and stock. Cross private land at your own risk.
- ▶ Do not take firearms across private land.
- ▶ Access to fossicking areas at night is not permitted.



No camping on private land. Camp in the scenic reserve only.

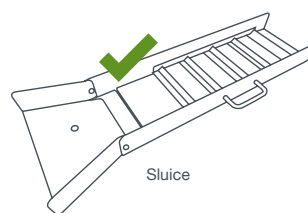


Light no fires. Gas camping stoves are permitted if used in a safe manner.

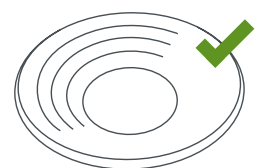
### Care for the environment

Follow the **Gold Fossicking Care Code**.

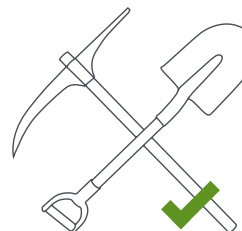
- ▶ Follow all statutory regulations that govern prospecting activities in New Zealand.
- ▶ Prospect only in the permitted areas.
- ▶ Only drive your vehicles on tracks and roads open to the public.
- ▶ Do not remove or damage any shrubs or trees, and minimise damage to ground-layer vegetation.
- ▶ Leave the ground as you found it. Backfill any holes you dig and replace leaf litter as it was as best you can.
- ▶ Do not use any equipment for excavation other than hand tools. Never use explosives.
- ▶ Don't disturb, destroy, interfere with or endanger archaeological sites or places of cultural significance.



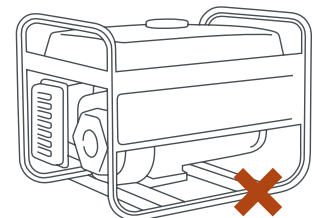
Sluice



Gold pan



Shovel and axe



Generator

### For more information

[www.doc.govt.nz/glenhope-scenic-reserve](http://www.doc.govt.nz/glenhope-scenic-reserve)



Department of  
Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

## History

The Howard valley was first visited in December 1843 by Charles Heaphy and John Spooner. Hinemoatū/Howard River was named after James Howard, the company storeman killed in the Wairau massacre that year. In February 1860, Julius von Haast ascended the Buller River to its junction with Te Kaupareniui/Gowan River.

The village of Howard was surveyed in 1863 once gold was discovered there, but was never settled. The route that became the Porika Track, up the Howard and along a ridge between Louis Creek and New Creeks, was an old route used by Māori, but by 1865 it was well used by Europeans on their way to and from the West Coast gold fields – busy enough to warrant a store and accommodation house.

## A 20th century gold rush

Gold fever sprang up once more in early 1915, when gold was discovered in the Howard valley. Louis Creek was soon being worked from end to end.

The wash was very shallow, and consisted of large stones resting on a soft granite bottom filled with fine gravel. The gold, which was coarse, was found lying on the granite and stuck in small crevices. In many cases the gold was saved, not in sluice boxes but by picking it out of the rock with a pocketknife after moving the stones and washing the underside.

Prospectors cut clearings or burnt them in the forest, and erected tents and huts. They built dams and water races so they could work the faces above the streams. Charlie Smith, who spent 7 months building a dam and water race in the upper reaches of Louis Creek, named his claim the 'Jeweller's Shop'.

Six months later, the mines inspector reported there were 150 men employed and apparently satisfied with their earnings. However, the inspector regarded the Howard valley as a poor man's field. Within a few years only a few determined miners were still working.

## Booth's Cottage

One of these stoic individuals was Sid Booth. He built his cottage with a fellow prospector, Ray Clarke, in a forest clearing on an old track for miners above Louis Creek in 1933, when both men were on the government's Gold Prospecting Subsidy Scheme.

The cottage was Sid's family home, with his wife Eva and their son Teddy, for over 10 years. Sid was often away mining or doing other work for months at a time, and Eva and Teddy stayed at the cottage.

A telephone line was connected to the cottage in the 1940s. You can see bulbs and other plants from the family's garden and various artefacts, including old footwear and bottles, around the clearing.



Booth's Cottage. Photo: DOC

The long rectangular cottage (11 m x 2.5 m) has four rooms and is built mainly of lapped beech slab over pole beech framing with a corrugated iron roof.

A similarly constructed shed to the east is typical of Depression-era mining huts on the Howard goldfield. It appears to have been constructed in four distinct stages. The horizontal lapped slabs are a variation on the slab construction theme.



Shoes left behind by gold miners of the past. Photo: DOC



## Dramatic Louis Creek

The first impression when looking down into Louis Creek is the sheer scale of the old workings. The creek bed has been thoroughly worked over. A closer look reveals old water races – often overgrown and indistinct – earth and stone wall dams, former hut sites, and parts of relic machinery often hidden in fern.

About 2 km up Louis Creek Road is a monument to miners who died in the First World War. The old nozzle, used for directing water pressure against faces, dates from the Depression.

## New Creek – returning to nature

The upper reaches of New Creek were intensively worked during the Depression. Although good gold was found there, the creek was often too dry over summer to be worked.

New Creek is the least modified and most beautiful part of the Howard goldfields, and nature has all but reclaimed the early disturbance. The small creek branches into several headwaters, each of which has been worked to some degree. There are several grassy clearings where huts once stood.



Gold panning in Louis Creek. Photo: DOC

## THE HOWARD GOLDFIELD

### THE NEW GOLD FIELDS.

#### A LARGE INFLUX OF MINERS

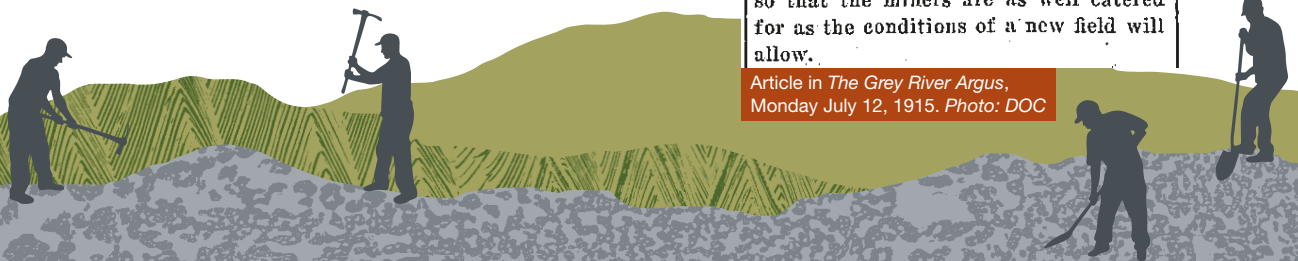
The site of the Howard Goldfield, to which there has been quite an influx of gold-miners during the past few months, is on Louis Creek, a tributary of the Buller River. The country is composed of granite and diorite, and the gold is somewhat coarse and shotty in its nature, varying in size from that of match heads upto pieces weighing an ounce or more; the largest find so far being something over three ounces.

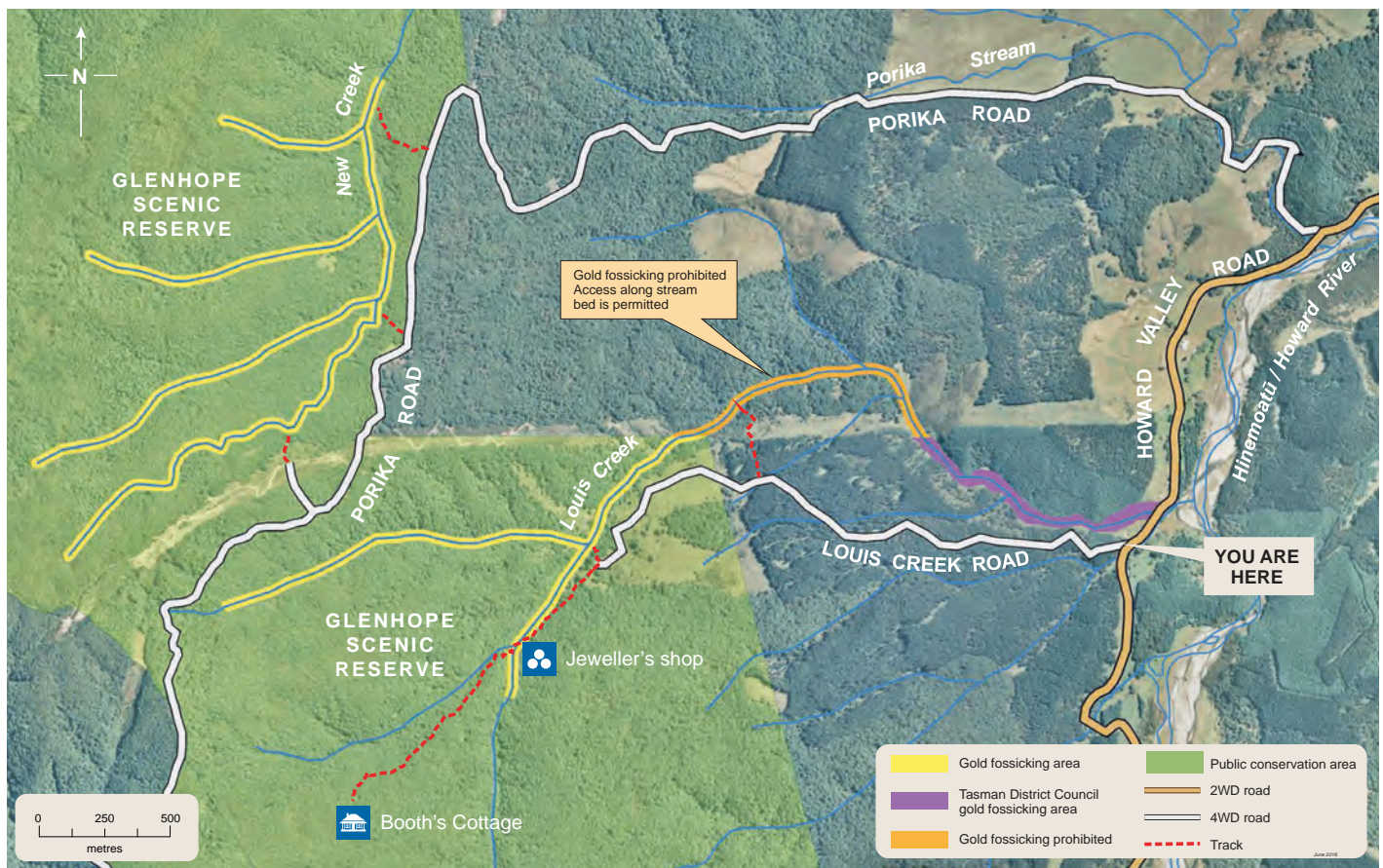
There are at present about 50 or 60 men working in the bed of Louis Creek and two small branches of it, comprising about 2½ or 3 miles of water course, and although there have been no sensational returns from any of the claims it would appear that most of the miners are doing fairly well, though there are some who claim to be only making "tucker." Louis Creek is only a small stream and about 15 or 20 feet is all the width that is being worked at present, and as the average depth of wash-dirt being worked is probably not more than 4 or 5 feet it will be seen that the field will not last very long unless a wider scope of country is proved to carry pay wash. There will probably be a further influx of gold miners to the place as soon as spring has set in, but all those who go should be prepared to go further afield, prospecting, as all the known auriferous ground appears to be taken up. Nevertheless, there would seem to be a large and promising field for prospecting in the surrounding country.

The mining camp may be reached by horse and cart from Glenhope railway station or from Mr. Rickard's (or Rickett's) accommodation house near the Hope Junction in about 4 or 5 hours. The miners going to the field usually employ Mr. Rickard's services to cart their luggage out to the camp.

Mr. Disson, a farmer, living near the Lake station, about half way out, runs out to the field with supplies of beef and mutton, and groceries, and he is erecting a store at the mining camp so that the miners are as well catered for as the conditions of a new field will allow.

Article in *The Grey River Argus*, Monday July 12, 1915. Photo: DOC





## Getting there

### Louis Creek

From SH63, follow the Howard Valley Road until you arrive at the Louis Creek Road turn-off. From here, follow Louis Creek Road for about 2 km (or a 45-min walk) to the reserve boundary. In wet weather the access track is only suitable for 4WD vehicles.

Three marked tracks give access to the creek bed (note the lower track crosses private land). The Jeweller's Shop is a 30-min walk from here. To visit historic Booth's Cottage, follow the forest track past the Jeweller's Shop for about 1 hr.

### New Creek

From SH63, follow the Howard valley Road for about 5 km. Turn right onto Porika Road, and follow it for about 5 km. Access tracks to New Creek are marked with 'Track' signs along the road. The Porika Road is a 4WD route linking the Howard Valley to Lake Rotoroa.

For 2WD cars, access to the New Creek gold fossicking area from the Howard valley end is only possible in good weather. Take extra care.

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