

4.4 KEY NATIONAL STORIES IN WEST COAST/TAI POUTINI CONSERVANCY

The West Coast was the second recipient of the tsunami of goldrush migrants into New Zealand. The Otago fields were left depleted by the movement of miners to the West Coast (within the Province of Canterbury at the time). Migrants also came directly from Victoria and New South Wales, and this influence was significant (Table 4). The Victorian influence was felt in the West Coast population. There were more Irish on the Coast, and the Catholic Church played a greater role than in other provinces. There were also a considerable number of Chinese who came via Otago after 1865. The goldrushes were the genesis of many West Coast towns, both extant (such as Hokitika, Westport, and Okarito) and abandoned (such as Dilmanstown, Goldsborough, and Six Mile).

Much of the early European exploration of the West Coast, often with the assistance of tangata whenua, occurred in the pursuit of gold. Whereas in Otago the runholders had expanded into much of the gold-bearing areas, on the West Coast the miners were the first pakeha settlers. The West Coast river ports were dangerous but gave ready access to sea transport routes, particularly to the East Coast of Australia, and Melbourne in particular. The route to Nelson also proved important in the early goldrush era.

Living conditions on the West Coast were especially difficult because of the isolation, dispersed nature of the fields, and distinctive climate. Death by drowning and disease were common on West Coast goldfields—‘The New Zealand Death’ (by drowning) was a particular feature.

Richard John Seddon’s West Coast association is important. The charismatic politician was a miner and publican at Kumara, where he established his political credentials. His most distinctive personal political achievement, the passing of the Old Age Pensions Act in 1898, can be seen as targeting the ageing mining constituency on the West Coast.

Seddon and the image of the digger are central to the image of the West Coast and both reflect an extractive economic base that has only begun to change in this generation.

Many of the stories associated with industrial quartz mining can be told at the Reefton mining sites. Although Waihi mining produced more gold over a longer period, Reefton mining was distinctive in its scale in the South Island, and the strength of its industrial unionism was comparable with that at Waihi.

TABLE 4. WEST COAST/TAI POUTINI CONSERVANCY (FIRST SUBSTANTIAL ALLUVIAL RUSH 1864).

HISTORIC THEMES	SUB-THEMES	STORIES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE THEMES	SIGNIFICANCE OF STORY AT WEST COAST SITES
2.4 Migrating	2.4.1 Migrating to save or preserve a way of life	Much of the migration to the West Coast was from Otago and then from Victoria. Even more so than Otago, West Coast miners were sojourners, i.e. there for the gold and then moved on. So were shopkeepers.	High national
	2.4.2 Migrating to seek opportunity	The 'tsunami effect' of migration on the West Coast was more pronounced, i.e. bigger wave and fewer people left afterwards. The Irish and Chinese components were higher.	High national
	2.4.5 Changing the face of rural and urban New Zealand through migration	Many West Coast towns owe their existence to gold, e.g. Hokitika, Charleston, Westport. There are also many abandoned towns.	High national
3.3 Surveying the land	3.3.3 Prospecting for precious metals	There had been very limited European exploration of the West Coast prior to the goldrushes, although again much of this 'exploration' was guided by local Māori.	High national
3.4 Utilising national resources	3.4.3 Mining	This was the second wave of the goldrush phenomenon and many of the techniques were similar to those used in Otago. 'Blacksanding was distinctive.'	Moderate national
		While the scale of dredging on the West Coast was not as extensive as Otago 1890-1910, it lasted longer and there are several remaining dredge hulks such as the two at Gillespies Beach and the dredge at Okarito. The later industrial quartz mining around Reefton and in the Grey Valley is also of national significance.	High national
3.6 Recruiting labour		While not particularly relevant to alluvial mining, the Reefton miner involvement in the 1912 Waihi strike/lockout is of national significance. Quartz miners were also drawn from a range of nationalities including Cornishmen, Australians and later Italians.	High national
3.7 Establishing communications	3.7.3 Establishing postal service	The establishment of connections with Victoria was distinctive as was the rejection of Canterbury administration. Not too sure if the postal service establishment is documented.	Moderate national
3.11 Altering the environment	3.11.1 Regulating waterways	The alteration to the environment on the coast was considerable, particularly via sluicing and later dredging. However, many early sites are now hard to distinguish because of regrowth.	Moderate regional/local
3.15 Developing economic links outside New Zealand		The West Coast link with Australia was distinctive, e.g. Victoria, Reuters at Hokitika.	High national
3.18 Financing New Zealand		It may be a challenge to tell this story from the West Coast, possibly from Hokitika.	Moderate national
4.5 Making settlements to serve rural New Zealand		There are a lot of ghost towns on the West Coast. This story of rapid growth and decline could be featured.	Moderate national/regional

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THEMES	SUB-THEMES	STORIES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE THEMES	SIGNIFICANCE
5.1 Working in harsh conditions	5.1.2 Coping with dangerous jobs and workplaces	The West Coast climate made pioneering living and working conditions particularly challenging. There are a lot of individuals who could be used, e.g. Bidy of the Buller. The 'New Zealand death', i.e. by drowning, was a feature, e.g. Superintendent Robinson. Silicosis in industrial quartz mining. Workers Compensation legislation.	High national High national
5.6 Working in the home		West Coast living conditions were distinctively difficult.	Moderate national
7.6 Administering New Zealand	7.6.3 Policing 7.6.4 Dispensing justice 7.6.6 Providing services and welfare	While the police system was developed in Otago, there are some great law and order stories on the West Coast, e.g. the 1868 riots. Much the same as above. In later time, Seddon's Old Age Pensions Act was supposedly targeting the unemployed old miners on the West Coast.	Moderate national Moderate regional High national
7.8 Establishing a regional and local identity		The digger image is probably stronger on the West Coast than elsewhere.	High regional
9.5 Living outside a family partnership		The single life was probably a greater feature on the West Coast than elsewhere because of the lack of settlement.	High national

NZ Historic Places Trust registered sites

NO.	NAME	LOCATION
263	Reefton School of Mines Building	22 Shiel Street, Reefton
5008	Donovan's Store	Okarito

Key associated sites and groups

History House, Greymouth

Ross Visitor Centre

Shanty Town

West Coast Historical Museum, Hokitika

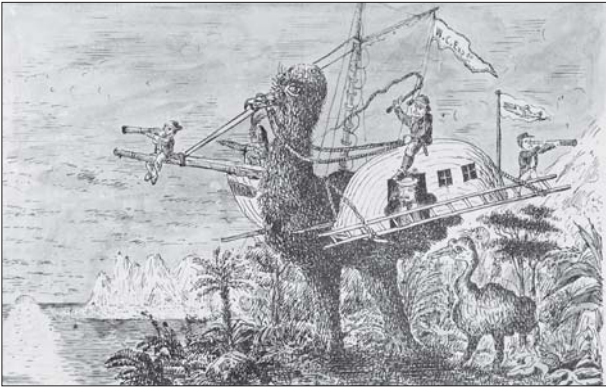
DOC Information Centre, Reefton

DOC Visitor Centre, Punakaiki

DOC West Coast Conservancy VAMS sites

VAMS SITE NO.	NAME	TYPE OF VISITOR ACCESS	PRIMARILY QUARTZ OR ALLUVIAL
<i>Buller area</i>			
1201025	Upper Fenian/Adams Flat track/Fenian goldfield	Day visitors	Alluvial
1202013	Britannia Track	Day visitors	Quartz
1202033	Argyle dam and water race	No visitors	Alluvial
1203003	Brighton cemetery	Short-stop	Related to alluvial
1202031	Constant Bay	Short-stop	Alluvial
1203020/25/9	Inland pack track (access to Brighton/Fox R.)	Back-country	Alluvial
1204001	Lyell campsite	Day visitors	Quartz
1204002	Lyell walkway	Day visitors	Quartz
<i>Greymouth area</i>			
1204003	Croesus battery	Day visitors	Quartz
1204009	Larry Creek track	Back-country	Quartz
1204019	Reefton School of Mines Historic building	Short-stop	Quartz
1204025	Murray Creek Track	Day visitors	Quartz
1204028	Inglewood Branch track	Day visitors	Quartz
1204031	Lankey Creek track	Day visitors	Quartz
1204039	Big River track to Waiuta	Back-country	Quartz
1204040	Big River historic settlement	Day visitors	Quartz
1204042	Big River winder and boiler	Day visitors	Quartz
1204043	Big River mine and poppethead	Day visitors	Quartz
1204057	Waiuta town walk	Day visitors	Quartz
1204058	Blackwater mine	Day visitors	Quartz
1204061	Prohibition Mine and Ball Mill	Day visitors	Quartz
1204063	Snowy Battery track to Waiuta	Day visitors	Quartz
1204064	Joker level-incline Tramway	Day visitors	Quartz
1205004	Croesus track	Back-country	Quartz
1205006	Garden Gully track	Day visitors	Quartz
1205019	Nelson Creek amenity area	Day visitors	Alluvial
1206102	Māori Gully cemetery	No visitors	Associations with alluvial
1205054	Goldsborough Picnic Area campsite	Overnight	Alluvial
1205055	Goldsborough track	Day visitors	Alluvial
1205073	Ross goldfield historic walkway	Day visitors	Alluvial
1205074	Ross goldfield historic reserve	Day visitors	Alluvial
1205073	Ross goldfield historic walkway	Day visitors	Alluvial
1205074	Ross goldfield historic reserve	Day visitors	Alluvial
1205077	Kaniere water race walkway	Day visitors	Alluvial
1205091	Styx Valley track	Back-country	Alluvial/quartz
1205104	Arahura Valley track	Back-country	alluvial/quartz
<i>Franz Joseph area</i>			
1206014	Harihari Coastal walkway	Day visitors	Alluvial
1206032	Three mile pack track	Day visitors	Alluvial
1206045	Tatare Tunnels	Day visitors	Alluvial
1206035	Donovans Hove	Short-stop	Alluvial
<i>South Westland area</i>			
1207001	Galway Beach track	Back-country	Alluvial
1207003	Gillespie's Beach	Day visitors	Alluvial
1207006	Miners' Cemetery walk	Short-stop	Alluvial
1267043	Gillespies' Beach historic area	No visitors	Alluvial

West Coast images



West Coast Expedition. *Otago Punch* 1865 cartoon of prospecting party harnessing a moa. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. F-302-1/4-MNZ.



Ahaura goldmining settlement at Napoleon Hill, Grey County 1866. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. F-148337-1/2.



Sluicing on the West Coast, 1880s. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. F-44511-1/2.



'Black sanding' at Rahui, near Charleston. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. F-15698-1/2.



Ross United goldfields shaft, Ross Flat. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. C-27253-1/2.

4.5 KEY NATIONAL STORIES IN SOUTHLAND CONSERVANCY

Southland was an also-ran in the early goldrushes and its most distinctive story is of Superintendent Menzie's attempt to obtain goldfield revenues (Table 5). There was an extensive Chinese settlement at Round Hill, and the scale of this settlement and the scale of the relict landscape are distinctive. The stories of quartz prospecting in Preservation Inlet are distinctive because of its lateness and the difficulty with which it was undertaken.

Interpretation may provide a challenge. The few alluvial sites in the north of the Conservancy, Nokomai, Upper Waikaia, are relatively inaccessible. Round Hill would seem to offer some interesting possibilities. There is also the potential to develop the Longwoods Track group, Riverton, including developing a track to Pot's Race.

TABLE 5. SOUTHLAND CONSERVANCY (FIRST SUBSTANTIAL ALLUVIAL RUSH 1861?).

HISTORIC THEMES	SUB-THEMES	STORIES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE THEMES	SIGNIFICANCE OF STORY TOLD AT SOUTHLAND SITES
2.4 Migrating	2.4.1 Migrating to save or preserve a way of life	Early goldrush sites were at Nokomai, Mataura, Orepuki, and in the Waikaia Valley. The Chinese at Round Hill are distinctive, although the ultimate scale of this migration was less than at Otago and the West Coast.	Moderate national
	2.4.2 Migrating to seek opportunity	Similar to Otago, but again the scale of the migration was less.	Moderate national
	2.4.5 Changing the face of rural and urban New Zealand through migration	Although not so many towns were established as a result of Southland goldrushes, there were Switzers, Waikaia, Nokomai, Round Hill, and Orepuki.	Moderate national
3.3 Surveying the land	3.3.3 Prospecting for precious metals	The early techniques were similar to those used on the West Coast and Otago.	Moderate national
		The isolation and technical difficulties of mining in Preservation Inlet from the late 1880s is distinctive, although much of this mining activity was quartz mining.	Moderate national/ high regional
3.4 Utilising national resources	3.4.3 Mining	Mining was never as dominant a feature of the Southland economy as that of Otago.	Low national
		Round Hill Hydraulic Sluicing operated for a very long time. Longwoods as a water race network.	Moderate national Moderate national
3.6 Recruiting labour		Possibly stories associated with getting a labour force to Preservation Inlet quartz mining.	Low national
		Stories of the Chinese settlement at Round Hill distinctive because of the large scale.	High national
3.7 Establishing communications	3.4.3 Establishing postal service	Example of establishing the phone line to Tuatapere and to Preservation Inlet.	Low national/ medium regional
3.11 Altering the environment	3.11.1 Regulating waterways		Low national
3.15 Developing economic links outside New Zealand			Low national

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THEMES	SUB-THEMES	STORIES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE THEMES	SIGNIFICANCE
3.18 Financing New Zealand			Low national
4.5 Making settlements to serve rural New Zealand		Limited research available.	Low national
5.1 Working in harsh conditions	5.1.2 Coping with dangerous jobs and workplaces		Moderate national
5.6 Working in the home			Low national
7.6 Administering New Zealand	7.6.3 Policing 7.6.4 Dispensing justice 7.6.6 Providing services and welfare	Superintendent Menzies' attempt to set up a police station in Queenstown is a distinctive story. Example of murder of William Chinn at Waiau. Chinese miners and access to Riverton Hospital.	High national Low national Moderate national
7.8 Establishing a regional and local identity			Low national/ moderate regional
9.5 Living outside a family partnership			Low national

DOC Southland Conservancy sites

SITE NO.	NAME	TYPE OF VISITOR ACCESS	PRIMARILY QUARTZ OR ALLUVIAL
	Round Hill		Alluvial

NZ Historic Places Trust registered sites

There are no NZHPT registered goldfields sites in Southland

Key associated sites and groups

Southland Museum

Southland images



Chinese gold sluicing at Winding Creek, Waikaka, Southland. Rev. G.H. McNeur seated at back. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. F-19144-1/2.



Rev. G.H. McNeur sluicing at Naseby, Southland, c. 1900. Reproduced by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z. Ref. no. F-19162-1/2.

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