



Breast Hill Track

(Map 117, 118, 119, 120)

Northern Start	Birchwood Rd carpark, Ahuriri Valley
Southern End	Gladstone Reserve, Lake Hawea
Distance	51.5km
Time	3-4 days
Tramping Standard	Tramping track

Route

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 Hawea 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 Hawea Station completed tenure review during 2010. This property has been owned by the Rowley family since 1912. Like Longslip Station, Lake Hawea 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 20min 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 Hawea 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 a kilometre 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 a kilometre distant.

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

Other Information

Accommodation en route

[Top Timaru Hut](#) - 6 bunks

[Stodys Hut](#) - 6 bunks - the hut has a dirt floor but was restored to reasonable condition

[Pakituhi Hut](#) - 8 bunks

Lake Hawea Village

Accommodation

Lake Hawea Motel - 56 Capell Ave - P: 03 441 1188

Lake Hawea Motor Lodge - Capell Ave - P: 0800 429 324 - Motel and hostel accommodation, restaurant and bar

Lake Hawea Holiday Park - 1208 Makarora Rd - P: 03 443 1767 - cabins and camping

Resupply

Sailz Lake Hawea Restaurant & Bar - P: 03 443 1696 - General store, post office, café and restaurant. Open daily from 7.30am.

Transport

Alpine Coachlines - P: 03 443 9120 - Wanaka based.

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 - see Trail Notes

Requirements

- Keep to the track
- Respect private land
- Leave gates as you find them
- No dogs
- No horses
- No firearms
- No bikes

Amenities (Start)

- No amenities
- Car park

Amenities (On Route)

- No amenities
- Accommodation huts