

The Silver Stream Water Race Tracks

This brochure describes a series of track circuits that explore the historic Silver Stream Water Race. This area provides a wonderful opportunity to explore some of Dunedin's fascinating history while enjoying nature.

The Winding Water Race

By the mid 1870s, the population of Dunedin was rapidly expanding and the only water reservoir at Ross Creek was no longer sufficient for the needs of the city. A drought and fire in December 1877 emphasised the need for aadditional water and led to the development of the Silver Stream Water Race.

The Silver Stream Water Race was completed in 1881 and consisted of 29km of winding open-race, timber sluices, tunnels, weirs and steel pipes. It began at the top weir on Silver Stream (see map) and wound around the western slopes of Swampy Summit, Flagstaff and Three Mile Hill to the Southern Reservoir in Kaikorai Valley. All eastern tributaries of Silver Stream from the top weir to the Three Mile Hill Road were diverted into the open race. In 1920, an electric pump was installed at the bottom weir, 04 pumping water up a pipeline and into the Water Race when needed.

The Silver Stream water scheme was not as successful as planned. In times of heavy rainfall, the open water race could not cope with the volume of water, while there was not enough storage at the Southern Reservoir for a long period of heavy demand for water.

Since the early 1940s, land subsidence and the need for constant maintenance resulted in much of the open Water Race being replaced with pipeline. The Water Race in this area was the only major part that was not piped. Following a severe flood in 1957, the Water Race above the pumping station was closed. 04 After this, water for the race was pumped from the pumping station directly up the hill into the open Water Race.

The Silver Stream Water Race was abandoned in the late 1960s. The current pumping station 02 moves water along a buried pipeline following a new route to the Southern Reservoir.



In the late 1980s, The Track Clearing Group began to re-open and develop the Silver Stream Water Race Tracks. This group, with help from the WEA Over 50s Tramping Club, continues to do great work in maintaining these tracks. The late Steve Amies was the founder of both groups and instrumental in re-opening the tracks.

This is a fascinating part of Dunedin's early European history. We hope you enjoy exploring it.

The Tracks



The Silver Stream Water Race Tracks are for the enjoyment of people experienced in walking or biking in the bush. Motorised vehicles are not allowed on any of these tracks.

Track conditions are variable. Surfaces are uneven and sometimes muddy, streams

and small slips must be crossed on foot, tracks have few markers, and some tracks are along exposed ridges where navigation is difficult in poor visibility. Remember that Dunedin's weather is changeable so carry waterproof clothing. Please wear footwear and clothing suitable for the bush environment.

The Steve Amies Circuit, Coal Creeks Circuit and Rain Gauge Circuit are very steep in parts, and therefore require a good level of fitness. The Powder Creek Circuit, McRaes Weir Circuit, Tunnel Circuit and the Racemans Track Circuit are suitable for people of average fitness. These less difficult circuits are also suited to mountain biking.

Dogs are allowed on the tracks, but you are advised to keep them leashed as possum traps and poison are laid in this area. Dogs must be kept on a leash when around stock.

The easiest way to get to these tracks from Dunedin is over Three Mile Hill Road and along Silverstream Valley Road. You can park your car at the Powder Creek car park 01 off the Flagstaff-Whare Flat Road 12 and at the locked gate on Swampy Summit Road. 12 Car parking space at these two sites is limited and thieves sometimes operate in this area, so please remove all valuables and lock your car.

The Silver Stream is also known as Whakaehu and relates to the taniwha Matamata, the guardian of a celebrated Kāti Mamoe chief Rakitauneke. Matamata lost its master Rakitauneke in the hills around Dunedin and proceeded inland in search of him. He slithered down the Whakaehu to search around the Taieri Plains. The Silver Stream was used by local Māori as a mahika kai (gathering food) place.

Toitu Te Whenua (Care for the land)

Safety Checklist

- Choose a circuit that suits your level of fitness, experience and the time available.
- Monitor your progress. Carry food and water for energy.
- Only use these tracks if you have suitable clothing and footwear.
- Stay on designated tracks.
- Please do not try to cross streams when water is discoloured.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Beware of slippery rocks and track surfaces.
- Let someone know where you are going, what you intend to do, when you will return and when you have returned.
- It is best to explore the area with at least two other people, one of whom should be experienced in the bush.
- Cell phones may not work.
- During periods of strong winds falling trees and branches make this area dangerous.

Walking—being prepared

- Take plenty of snacks and fluid (water).
- In summer take sunscreen and wear a hat.
- Remember that weather can change quickly—always take warm clothing.
- Hide valuable items from view in your vehicle or take them with you.

Environmental Care

The tracks are provided for you to enjoy the area. Many tracks cross private property. Please remember that access through private property is a privilege, not a right. A few simple rules must be observed:

- No dogs allowed on all tracks unless otherwise mentioned.
- Use gates or stiles and leave gates as you find them.
- Respect restrictions on dogs and keep them under control.
- Please respect all stock and wildlife – give animals a chance to get out of your way.
- Some tracks may be closed for the lambing season each September and October.
- Don't light any fires.
- Take all your rubbish away with you.
- Do not take any firearms.
- Give way to other track users.
- Park vehicles with care and courtesy.
- Remember all land is owned or administered by someone, please respect it.
- Report any obstructions or hazards to us on 477 4000.



More Information

For more advice or information, please contact us on 477 4000.

Disclaimer

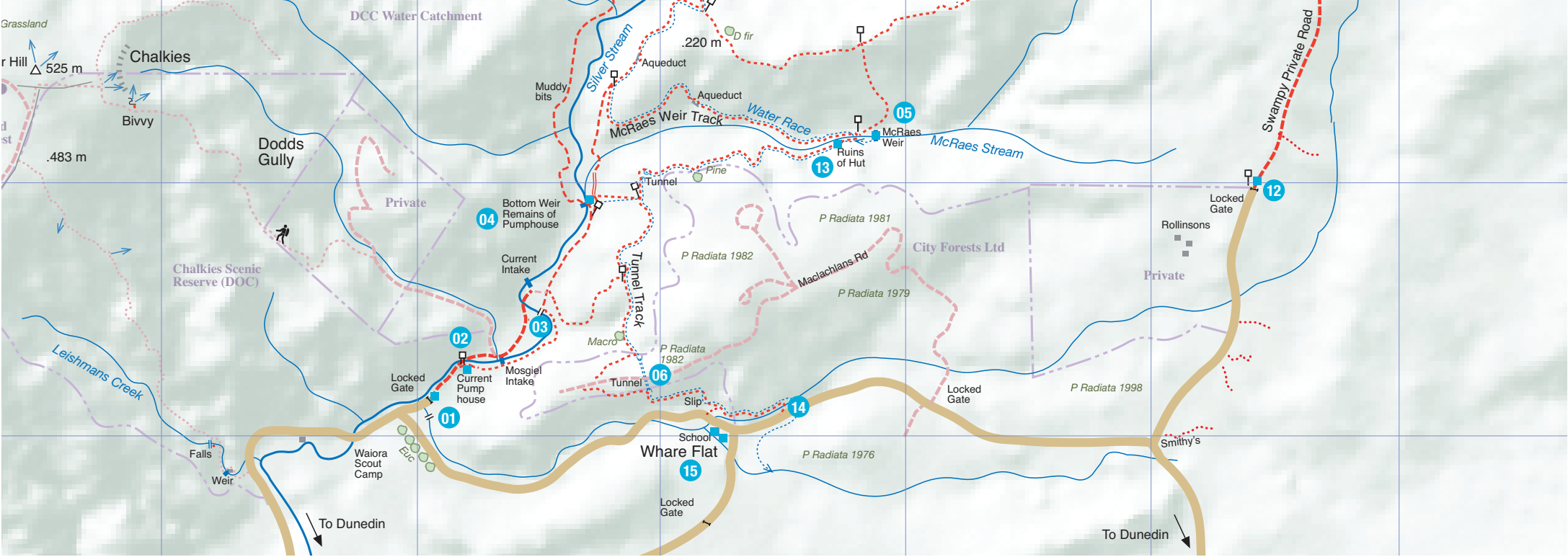
This brochure is intended as a general guide only. While we have worked to ensure all information was accurate at the time of printing (May 2012), the changing nature of the physical environment means the information contained in this brochure may not always be completely accurate.

Other Dunedin City Council Track Brochures

- Jubilee Park and Forrester Park (Beginner/Intermediate Mountain Bike Rides)
- Rough Tracks
- Signal Hill and Bethunes Gully (Advanced Mountain Bike Rides)
- Silverstream Water-Race Tracks
- Skyline Walks
- Strolls Near Streams
- Under the Eye of the Mopanui
- Walking With Wheels
- Wandering the West Harbour
- Where's That



The Silver Stream Water-Race Tracks



The Silver Stream Water Race Tracks

Circuits are designed to return you to where you started. Keep to your chosen circuit by following the coloured symbol on signs at track junctions. Track signs and circuit symbols are for one direction only.

Track classification

You can expect to encounter the following conditions on tracks with the following classifications. Track classifications are relevant whether walking or mountain biking.

Moderate—Uneven surface with most vegetation cleared from the track. Track should be easy to follow with a steady gradient.

Hard—Rough surface with some vegetation cleared, some markers to indicate the way, short periods where the track is steep.

Route—Rough surface with minimal vegetation clearance, few markers to indicate the way. Track will be steep for some distance.

Circuit descriptions

The suggested times are rough estimates only and do not take into account stops for extended lengths of time. They are for a return journey unless otherwise specified.

Short circuits

Picnic Area and Trig Q

Time: 1–1½ hour return. **Track Classification:** Moderate
Follow the Steve Amies Track to Trig Q.

Park your car at the locked gate on the Swampy Summit Road **12** and walk up the road for 20 minutes to the Steve Amies Track. Head along this track and enjoy an easy five minute trip along a grassy ridge to the picnic area **11**. You will be rewarded with expansive views of native forest, the Taieri Plain and the Silver Peaks. Trig Q **10** is another five minutes along the ridge. Take your lunch and enjoy a picnic in the sunshine.

Caution: This circuit is on an exposed ridge. Check the weather forecast and ensure you have adequate clothing. A lookout is 20 minutes (one way) from the Trig Q along the Little Coal Creek Track. Care is needed, as there is a vertical fall to the forest below.

McRaes Weir Circuit

Time: 2–2½ hours return. **Track Classification:** Hard
Follow the red weir symbol on track signs.

Park your car at the Powder Creek car park, **01** and follow the road to the swing bridge **03** over the Silver Stream. Follow the Racemans Track until you first see the Water Race.

From there, turn right along the McRaes Weir Track and follow the Water Race to McRaes Stream and weir **05**. Cross the stream. To get to the Weir, turn left and follow a short track for a couple of minutes. Retrace your steps to the main track and head down the Tunnel Track, past an old workers' hut **13**. Continue along the Water Race past a short tunnel until you get to a sign that returns you to the swing bridge.

Powder Creek Circuit

Time: 2–2½ hours return. **Track Classification:** Hard
Follow the gold panning symbol on track signs.

Park your car at the Powder Creek car park, **01** and follow the road, to the swing bridge **03** over the Silver Stream. Follow the Racemans Track for about 1½ hours until you reach the Powder Creek Track on your left. Head down this track, cross the Silver Stream and head back toward the bottom weir **04** along the other side of the valley. This circuit involves five stream crossings and passes through several grassy glades.

Powder Creek apparently got its name after the discovery of fine gold dust in the stream.

Long circuits

Tunnel Circuit

Time: 3½–4 hours return. **Track Classification:** Hard
Follow the green tunnel symbol on track signs.

This circuit is the same as the McRaes Weir Circuit, but continues along the water race on the Tunnel Track past a 262m tunnel **06**. After a short climb, you gently descend to Whare Creek and emerge onto Flagstaff-Whare Flat Road. Slightly upstream before you cross Whare Creek are the remains of fluming where the Water Race went under the stream. **14** Turn right at the road and head past the old Whare Flat School **15** back to the car park. Be careful walking along the road as cars can suddenly appear. Children of the Water Race workers used part of the Tunnel Track to get from their homes in the Silver Stream area to the Whare Flat School.

Coal Creeks Circuit

Time: 4–4½ hours return. **Track Classification:** Route
Follow the black pick symbol on track signs.

Park your car at the locked gate on Swampy Summit Road **12**. Go up the road and along the Steve Amies Track to Trig Q **10**. From there, head along the Little Coal Creek Track to the Water Race on Racemans Track. Turn right along the Racemans Track for about 20 minutes before going up the hill via the North Coal Creek Track and then Little Coal Creek Track to Trig Q. Parts of these tracks are steep—beware of sheer drops!

Steve Amies Track Circuit

Time: 4–4½ hours return. **Track Classification:** Hard
Follow the orange person symbol on track signs.

This circuit starts the same as the Coal Creeks Circuit. However, turn left at Trig Q, **10** continuing down the Steve Amies Track, gradually descending a long ridge into the Silver Stream Valley. Turn right and follow the Racemans Track and Water Race for 1 hour. At Little Coal Creek Track climb back to Trig Q and then the road. Parts of these tracks are steep—beware of sheer drops!

This circuit was named after the late Steve Amies, founder of the group that re-opened and maintain these tracks.

Racemans Track Circuit

Time: 4–4½ hours return. **Track Classification:** Hard
Follow the purple hut symbol on track signs.

Park your car at the Powder Creek car park **01** and follow the road, to the swing bridge **03** over the Silver Stream. This relatively flat circuit takes you up the Silver Stream Valley and along the upper section of the Water Race to its source at the top weir. Next to the track are the ruins of huts **07 08** used by the workers who maintained the Water Race. At the top of the track retrace your path to the Powder Creek car park.

Alternatively, on your return journey, join the Powder Creek Track and head back to the bottom weir **04** along the other side of the Silver Stream.

Rain Gauge Circuit

Time: 4½–5 hours return. **Track Classification:** Route
Follow the blue rain-gauge symbol on track signs.

This circuit starts the same as Coal Creeks Circuit to Trig Q **10**. Continue along the Little Coal Creek Track and down North Coal Creek Track to the Water Race in the Silver Stream Valley. Turn right and follow the Racemans Track and Water Race to the top weir. **09** Climb the long, steep Rain Gauge Spur Track back to Swampy Summit Road. Parts of this circuit are steep—beware of sheer drops!

In the days when the Water Race was operating, rainfall was recorded in a rain gauge on this track.

Caution: Some of this track is along an exposed ridge. Visibility is poor in bad weather and the track is not well marked. Ensure you have adequate clothing.

Remember the coloured symbol of the circuit you are about to follow. These symbols are at track junctions only.