

Roaring Lion Trail, Queenstown

The Roaring Lion Trail is a 27km hand-built high country mountain biking and walking track that wends its way around the spectacular snowgrass and spaniard-covered ridges at the southern end of the Hector Mountains. As a privately built and maintained trail on Blackmore Station, there is an access fee of \$20/person and an option to book the trail huts for a quiet night in the high country.

The track starts behind Garston Ski Hut and climbs slowly up the Slate Range to Welcome Rock at the highest point of the trail at 1130m. It's old school single track, built with a pick and shovel, just like the old gold miners and water race builders used, and just wide enough to flow with the terrain and fit unobtrusively between spiky spaniard and tall tussock.

From Welcome Rock, the trail leads to Slate Hut. From here, the trail slowly descends a long ridge to eventually reach the Roaring Lion Water Race. Hand built in 1898, this was a marvel of Victorian engineering and channelled water in quantity from the Nevis Valley to the Nokomai Goldfields. It was a massive task and the subsequent maintenance drove two companies to bankruptcy.

The track has been beautifully built along the edge of what remains of the water race with views into the Nokomai River where large remnants of beech forest hug the gullies and carry on up to sections of the water race in favourable places.

Soon Mud Hut, the second bookable hut, is reached. This also sleeps four and has an outdoor bath to lounge under the stars in.

Continue down the water race, climbing to where it changes levels to match the broken terrain and eventually descend a slip face to the remains of an ingenious section of large riveted pipes that once diverted the water over this moving slip. Much still remains and a long row of up-standing shovels provides a fitting tribute to the enterprise. The water this race supplied to the goldfield released untold riches via its massive hydraulic sluicing.

Lee Lum's derelict sod hut is just a few kilometres farther on with only the foundation remaining. Just before the Nevis Valley Saddle, an old supply cart is parked up beside the trail. Its resting spot commands an excellent view.

From the saddle, there's a final push to Nevis Road and back to the historic ski hut.

Wild file

Access Nevis Road just north of Garston

Grade Three

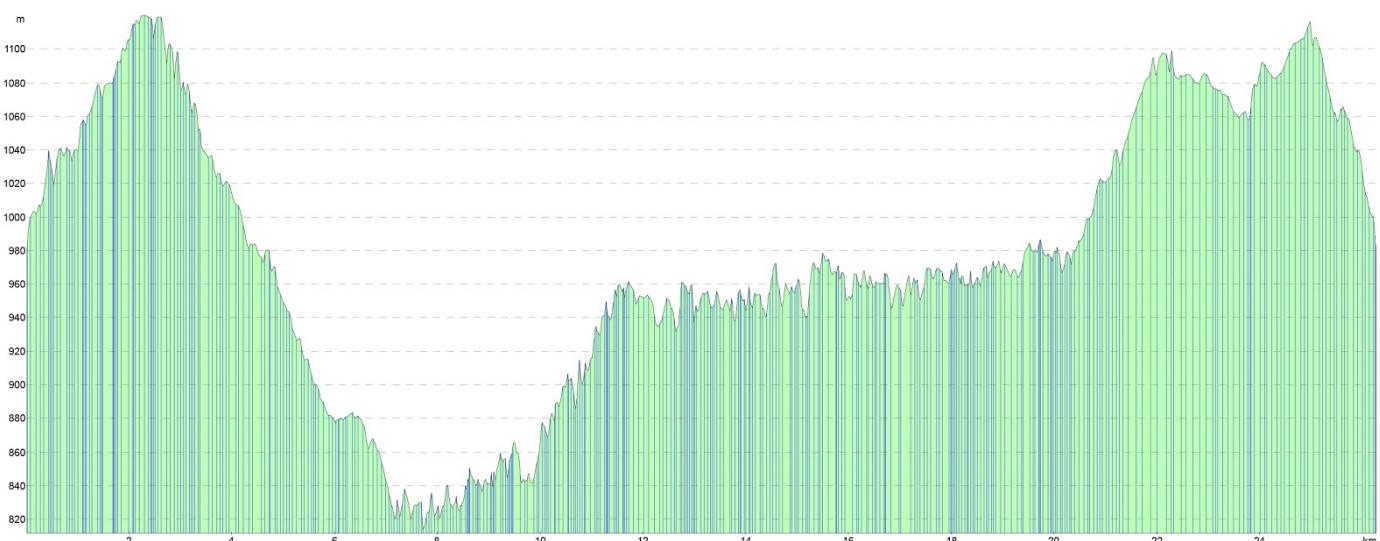
Distance 27km

Total ascent 1292m

Topo50 map CD11 Kingston

Further information Contact www.welcomerock.co.nz

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, *Wilderness* does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. The GPX file in these cases is a 'best guess' of the route. Users should use GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find their way.

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