

## Omeo Gully Track, Kopuwai Conservation Area

The track has become one of my favourite Central Otago day walks, but can be turned into an overnighiter, or even a multi-day trip, to Boundary Hut and Old Woman Hut, and also forms part of a challenging mountain bike loop.

It starts at the Omeo Gully Road end and heads on a 4WD track along the valley floor through farmland, past an orchard and alongside old gold tailings. The area was extensively mined during the gold rush, beginning in 1862.

The trail gently climbs for about 20 minutes, twice crossing Omeo Creek – which can usually be rock-hopped across – before beginning the steep ascent of the Old Man Range. The track is marked by small yellow markers, weaving up a spur alongside a farm 4WD track. It soon provides extensive views of the Dunstan, Hawkdun, Pisa and Cairnmuir ranges and the grass, matagouri and briar, give way to tussock and large schist tors.

After about two hours, it reaches the boundary of the Kopuwai Conservation Area, a 20,000ha reserve that encompasses the bulk of the Old Man Range tops, with altitudes from 800m to 1682m.

Heading right at the reserve boundary, at 1100m, there is a creek that leads to an old musterer's hut and a large area of gold workings with sluicings still visible. The corrugated iron hut is on its last legs, but you can still see the old canvas bunks and a rusted out fireplace inside. The goldmines near the top of the Old Man Range were among the harshest in the country and a number of miners died in snowstorms on the range.

The track from the reserve boundary continues to the summit of the Old Man Range on the Obelisk Range Track, peaking at Obelisk – a 26m pillar of schist – which Māori called Kopuwai, a mythical giant that preyed on hunting parties with a pack of two-headed dogs. This adds 5.8km each way to the trip..

The track is closed for lambing each year between October 15 and November 15 and the tops are covered in snow during the winter months.

### Wild file

**Access** Omeo Gully Road car park, about a 10 minute drive from Alexandra

**Grade** Moderate-difficult

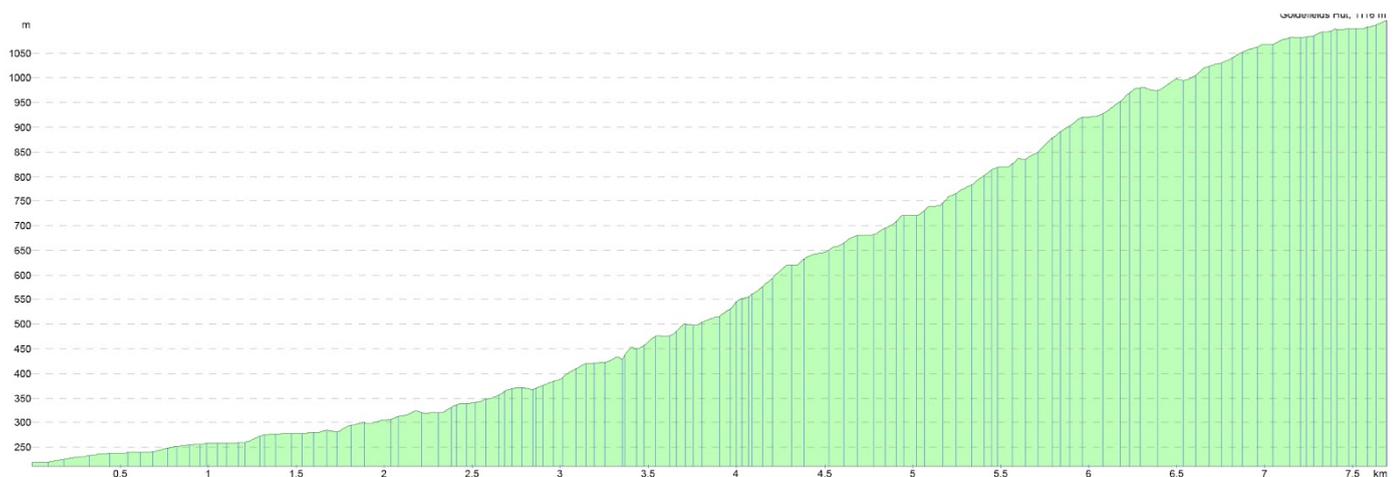
**Time** 6hr return to the Obelisk Loop Track.

**Distance** 15.4km return

**Total ascent** 912m

**Topo50 map** CC13

### Elevation



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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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