

# BLUFF HILL MOTUPŌHUE



## History

Bluff is the oldest European town in New Zealand, having been settled since 1824. James Spencer was the first European settler on the Southern mainland. Spencer landed at Bluff in January 1824 and his house is said to be the first European house in Southland. Spencer obtained permission from the local Maori to settle on some of the land now known as Bluff Hill.

The Maori name for Bluff is Motupōhue; motu – because of its island-like appearance from the sea; and pōhue because of the white convolvulus that flowers in the forest.

Bluff Hill holds a special place in the history of Maori, and has been recognised under the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 as a site with statutory acknowledgement. The Act acknowledges Ngai Tahu's cultural, spiritual, historic and traditional association to Motupōhue (Bluff Hill).

Bluff Hill was granted Tōpuni status (a legal recognition of its importance to Ngai Tahu Tribe) in 2000 and one of the newly constructed tracks around that time was later named Tōpuni Track to recognise this. The other track was named Millennium Track.

The concept of Tōpuni comes from rangatira (chiefs) extending their mana (power and authority) over places or people by laying their cloaks over them. It symbolises the tribe's commitment to conservation and ensures its values are put into practise in the management of Bluff Hill/Motupōhue.

During World War II, Bluff Hill had the role as Southland's main coastal defence. The army selected an area on Bluff Hill (currently on Department of Conservation land) and construction started in April 1942. Work was completed in September 1942 and the army moved in during December 1942. The battery was closed in August 1944. Remains of the gun battery and concrete bunkers can still be seen with access from the end of Gunpit Road.

Parts of Bluff Hill are classified as Scenic Reserve and, in addition to the rest of the reserve, are managed for preserving as far as possible its natural state of native flora and fauna, while allowing public access for recreational activities, providing that it is not to the detriment of the natural features, flora and fauna.

## Facilities



No biking is allowed on walkways except the Pearce Street Track. Please contact the Invercargill City Council Parks Division for more information on cross country and downhill mountain bike tracks on Bluff Hill.



Dogs must always be on a lead on walking tracks



No Dogs between Ocean Beach and Lookout Point



Toilets



No camping



Parking



Picnic facilities



Lookout / Views



Interpretation

## Contact

Bluff Hill tracks are jointly managed by Invercargill City Council Parks Division and Department of Conservation (DOC).



Phone: 03 219 9070 (ICC Parks)

Email: [parks@icc.govt.nz](mailto:parks@icc.govt.nz)

Website: [www.icc.govt.nz](http://www.icc.govt.nz)



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

Phone: 03 211 2400

(DOC – Southland Conservancy Office)

Craigs 169511

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## Location

Bluff is situated 25km southeast of Invercargill on State Highway 1. Access to Bluff Hill/Motupōhue is signposted off SH1, via Lee Street up Flagstaff Road to the lookout.

The Glory Track can be accessed via Walker Street and Gunpit Road, and the other tracks start at Stirling Point from the end of SH1.

## Walking Tracks

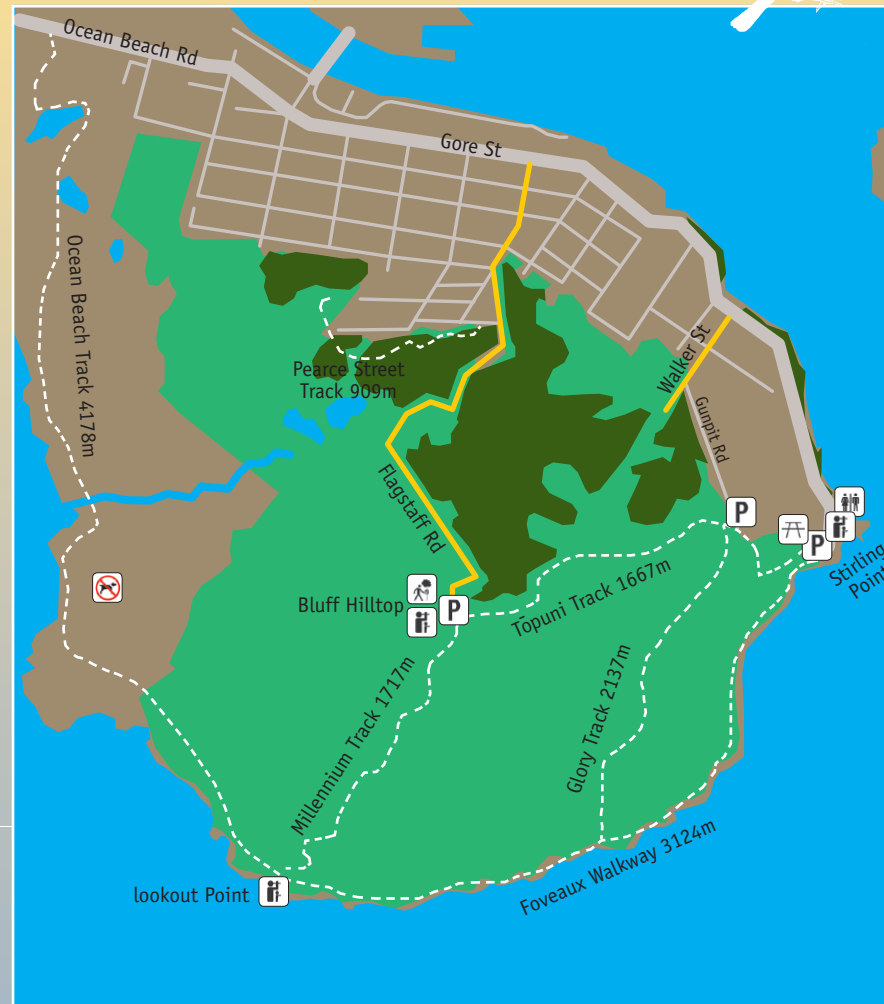
Original native forest, wind-battered coast and scrub-covered hillsides are some of the delights of Bluff Hill/Motupōhue. Tracks are well marked and range from steep climbs to a track able to be negotiated by wheelchair.

The walks provide a range of experiences from native forest of rimu, miro and Southern rata, to tough coastal scrub on the rocky shores.

Local birdlife includes New Zealand pigeon/Kereru, Tui, Stewart Island Shag, White fronted Tern and Sooty shearwater/Titi.

Panoramic views of Stewart Island contrast with vistas of nearby islets including Dog Island.

Bluff is an area of rich and diverse cultural, natural and human history.



## Foveaux Walkway

Stirling Point to Lookout Point – 60 minutes one way

The coastal track from Stirling Point to Lookout Point has an easy grade and well-compacted surface providing good views across Foveaux Strait.

## Tōpuni Track

Stirling Point to Bluff Hilltop – 50 minutes uphill one way

A short track from Stirling Point climbs steeply past the WWII gun emplacement to meet the Tōpuni Track, Gunpit Road access and Glory Track. The Tōpuni Track continues up an undulating path (steep in parts) through regenerating forest and coastal shrub lands to the summit of Bluff Hill.

## Glory Track

Tōpuni Track to Foveaux Walkway – 60 minutes one way

The Glory Track offers an alternative return track through the quiet shelter of native forest.

## Millennium Track

Lookout Point to Bluff Hilltop – 55 minutes uphill one way

A steep track from Lookout Point to the summit of Bluff Hill through wind-shorn shrubland is rewarded by superb views across Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island/Rakiura.

## Ocean Beach Track

Lookout Point to Ocean Beach – 90 minutes one way

The coastal track becomes a marked route across private farmland. No dogs allowed. Fur Seals and Southern Right Whales may visit the coast in winter.

## Pearce Street Track

Pearce Street to McDougall Street – 20 minutes one way

This short, undulating easy grade walk/cycle track winds along open scrubland, with views over Bluff and out to the ocean in places.

