FREE PREVIEW

FIELD PLANNING GUIDE

# PAYSTREAK NZ

## FREE Quick Start Guide

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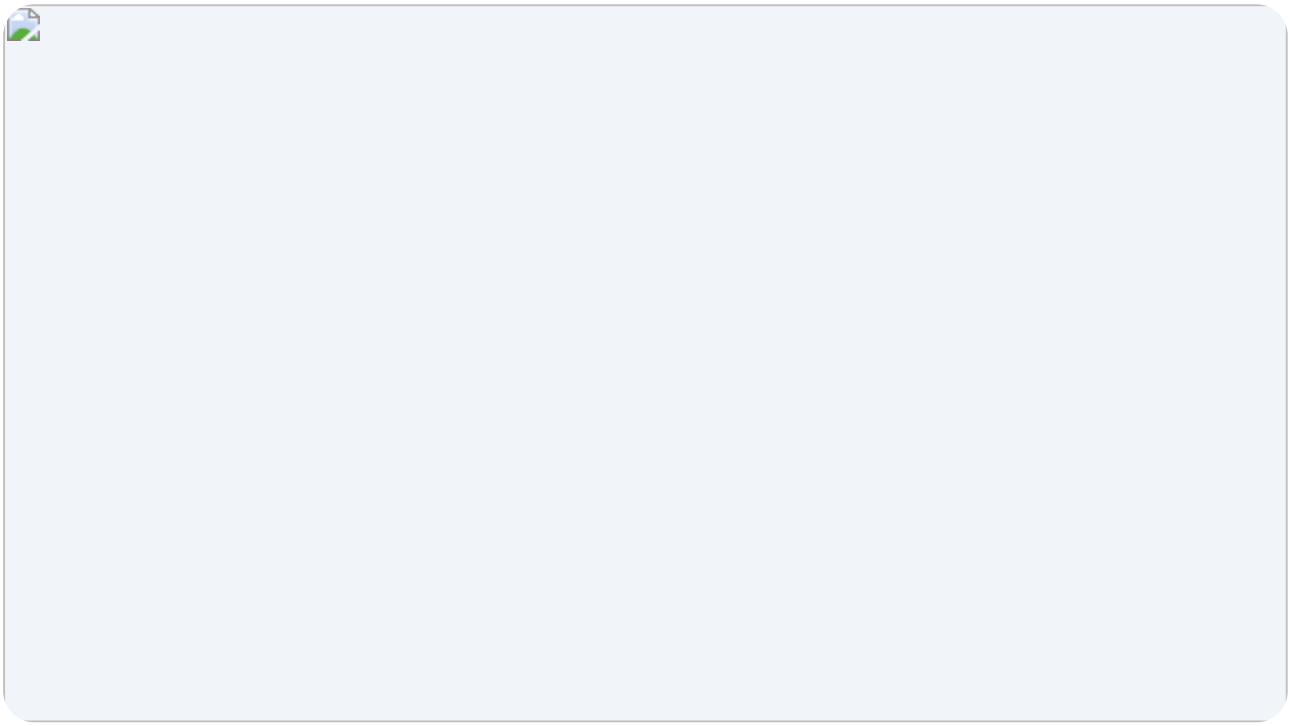
Your journey into NZ gold starts here.

OTAGO REGION

ID: PS-101

# Arrow River

📍 -44.936, 168.832 🚶 2WD to Ramshaw Lane car park. 5-minute walk to river.



## FIELD OVERVIEW

The Arrow River is one of New Zealand's most iconic alluvial goldfields and the birthplace of modern-day recreational gold panning in Otago. Gold was first discovered here in late 1862 by shearer Jack Tewa, triggering a rush that would see 1,500 miners camped along its banks within months. By January 1863, the first gold escort transported an astonishing 340kg of gold from the Arrow alone.

## GOLD RUSH HISTORY

The Arrow River goldfield shaped the town of Arrowtown and played a pivotal role in New Zealand's colonial economy. After European miners exhausted the easy alluvial gold by the mid-1860s, the Otago Provincial Council invited Chinese miners from Australia to rework the tailings. These skilled prospectors established a settlement on Bush Creek that remains preserved today as a heritage site. At its peak, the Chinese community numbered over 100, living in stone huts and operating stores along the riverbank.

## GEOLOGY INTEL

The gold here is fine "flour" gold derived from ancient alluvial deposits laid down by glacial action. It concentrates behind large boulders on inside river bends, often sitting on a false bedrock of blue clay about 30cm below the surface. Use a 50-mesh classifier for best results. After floods, fresh gold is deposited on gravel bars near Ramshaw Lane and the Chinese settlement area.

**PROSPECTOR'S TIP**

Dig behind large boulders on inside bends. The gold sits on a clay layer about 30cm down. Use a 50-mesh classifier.

**STAY & CAMPING**

Arrowtown Holiday Park ($45/night). No freedom camping.

## ⚠ COMPLIANCE & ACCESS

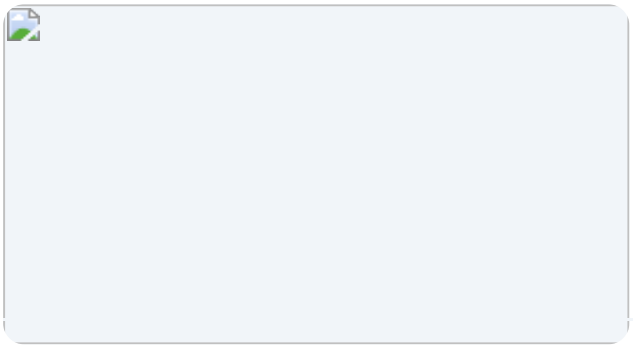
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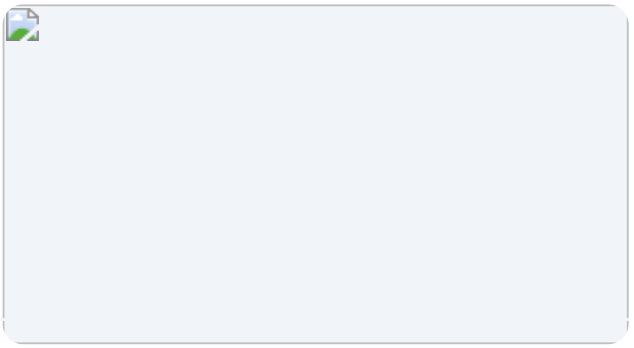
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## 📸 FIELD PHOTOGRAPHY



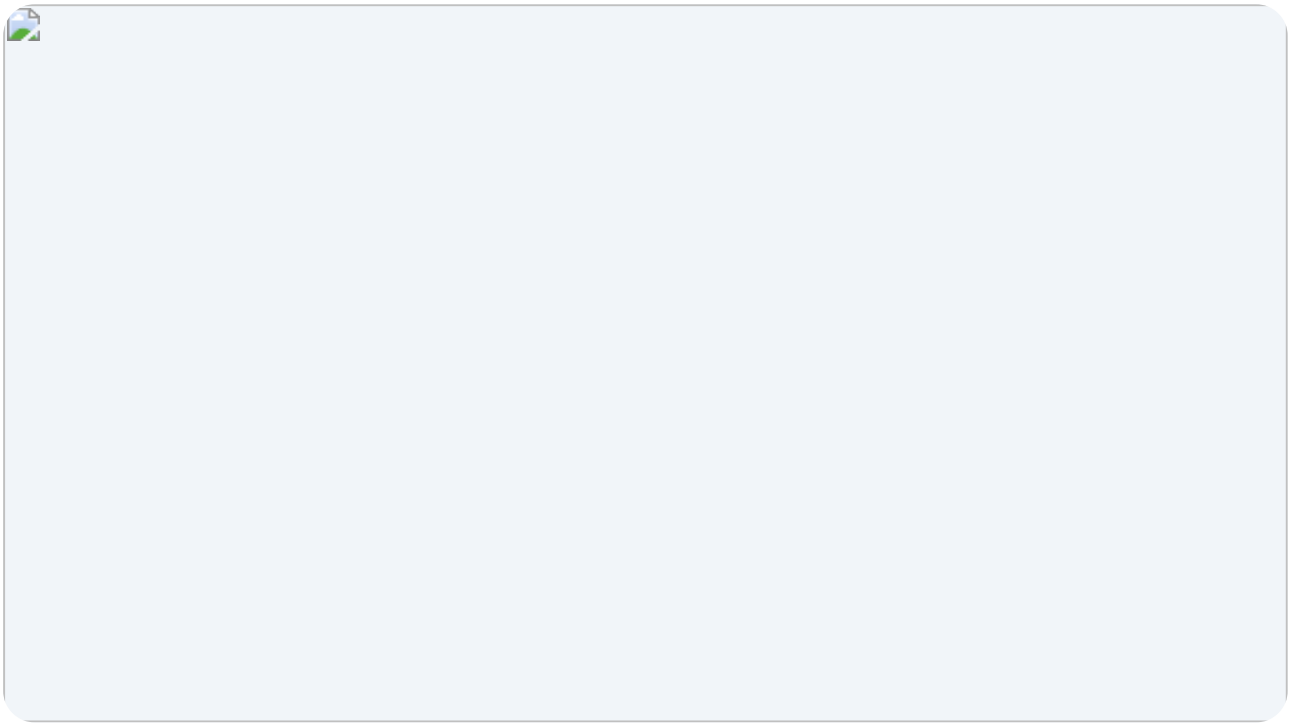


OTAGO REGION

ID: PS-102

# Gabriel's Gully

📍 -45.881, 169.694 🚶 Sealed road from Lawrence. Easy access, family-friendly.



## FIELD OVERVIEW

Gabriel's Gully is where New Zealand's gold rush began. On 25 May 1861, Australian prospector Gabriel Read struck gold here, famously describing it as "shining like the stars in Orion on a dark frosty night." Within months, over 10,000 miners had descended on this remote Otago gully, transforming the colony forever and making Dunedin New Zealand's wealthiest city.

## GOLD RUSH HISTORY

Gabriel Read had experience on the Californian and Australian goldfields before arriving in Otago. His discovery at the head of this small tributary of the Tuapeka River triggered New Zealand's first major gold rush. The find was so significant that miners worked 24-foot square claims using cradles and pans. Lawrence, the nearby township, became a thriving settlement almost overnight. By 1865, Chinese miners arrived to rework the exhausted claims, recovering gold the Europeans had missed.

## GEOLOGY INTEL

The alluvial gold at Gabriel's Gully originated from the Blue Spur Conglomerate, an ancient deposit exposed by erosion. The gold is coarse by New Zealand standards, with occasional "pickers" (small nuggets) still found in bedrock cracks. Modern prospectors focus on the clay layers at the base of old workings, particularly where the gully walls meet the creek bed.

💡 **PROSPECTOR'S TIP**

Test the blue clay layers (pug) at the base of old tailings. The gold often sits directly on this hard clay.

⛺ **STAY & CAMPING**

No overnight camping in the reserve. Stay in Lawrence (motels and holiday park).

## ⚠️ COMPLIANCE & ACCESS

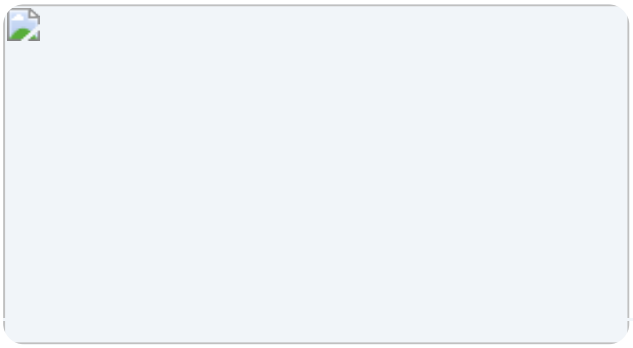
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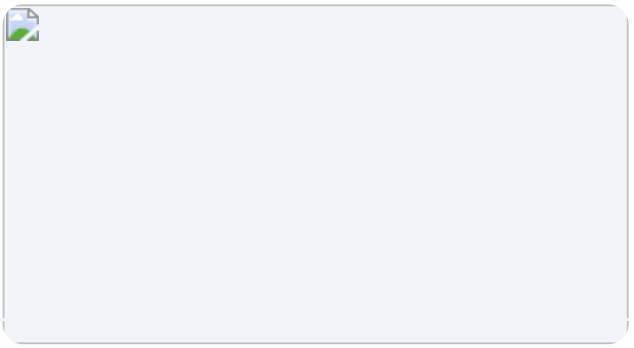
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## 📸 FIELD PHOTOGRAPHY



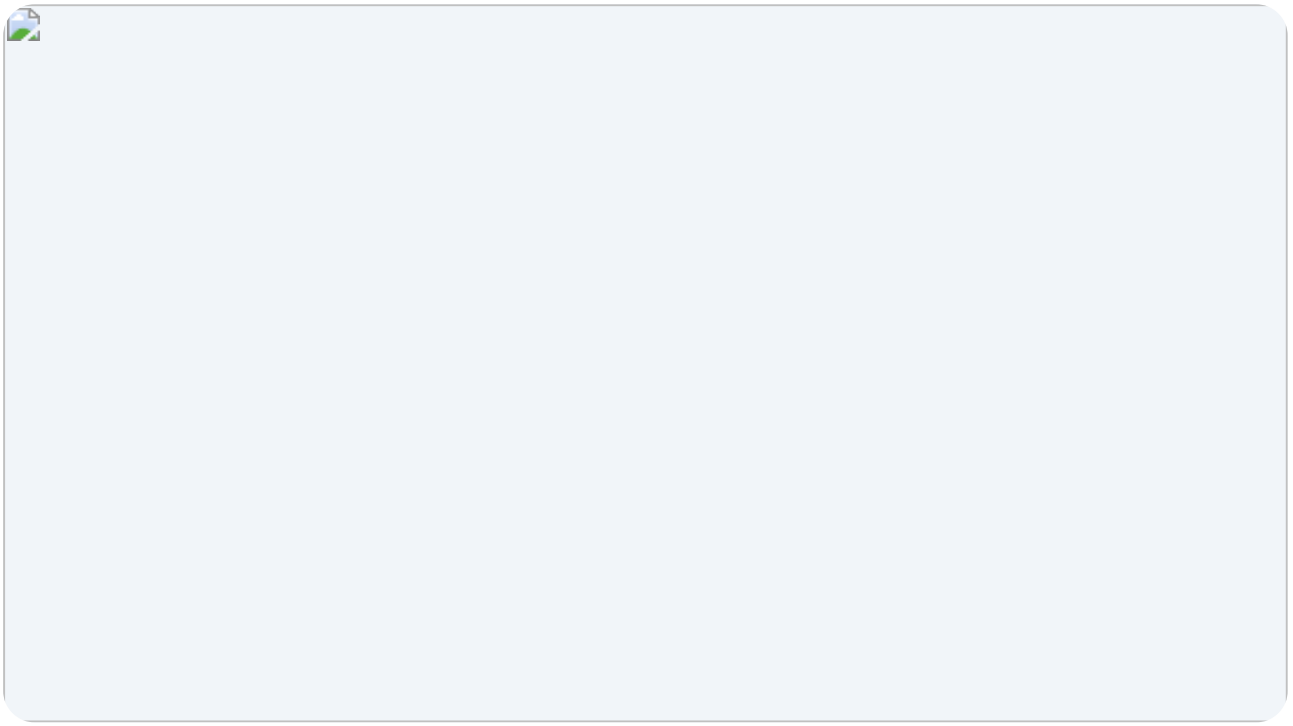


WEST COAST REGION

ID: PS-103

# Slab Hut Creek

📍 -42.163, 171.787 🚶 Easy 10-minute walk from Slab Hut Creek Road car park.



## FIELD OVERVIEW

Slab Hut Creek is the West Coast's most popular family-friendly fossicking spot. The creek runs clear and shallow through native bush, with easily accessible alluvial gold in the stream gravels. It's the perfect introduction to gold panning for beginners and children.

## GOLD RUSH HISTORY

The creek was worked during the 1860s West Coast rush but never on a large scale, meaning there's still plenty of colour to be found. Its easy access from Reefton and pleasant setting have made it the go-to spot for recreational panners visiting the region.

## GEOLOGY INTEL

Fine flour gold concentrates on a false bedrock of blue-grey clay approximately 30cm below the surface gravel. The gold originated from quartz veins in the surrounding ranges and was deposited by stream action. Black sand (magnetite) layers show where heavy minerals settle, so they are a good place to sample first, though black sand does not guarantee gold.

💡 **PROSPECTOR'S TIP**

Dig down about 30cm until you hit the blue-grey clay. Gold sits on this false bottom with the black sands.

⛺ **STAY & CAMPING**

DOC Slab Hut Creek campsite, about 10 km south of Reefton (NZ$15 per adult per night, book via DOC).

## ⚠️ COMPLIANCE & ACCESS

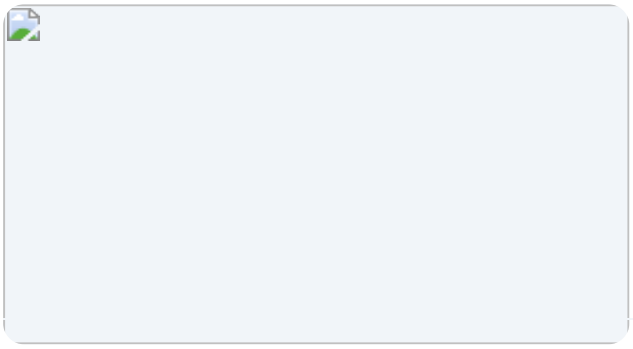
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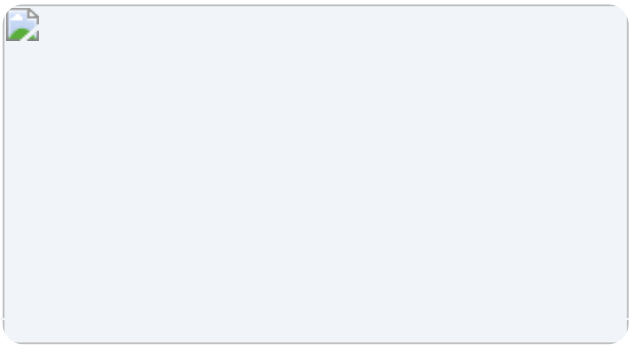
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# Before You Head Out

This guide is a planning aid built from available research as of **January 2026**. Goldfields, access rules, land status, weather, water levels and closures can change.

**Use at your own risk:** Paystreak NZ provides this for educational and recreational purposes. We cannot guarantee gold presence or site safety. Conditions vary.

**Legal Compliance:** You are responsible for panning legally. Always check current DOC/local authority status, public fossicking rules, private-land boundaries, and active mining claims before fieldwork.

**Safety First:** Inform someone of your plans. If you are entering the back-country, carry a PLB. NZ rivers rise in minutes. If in doubt, stay out.

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**PLAN WELL. LEAVE NO TRACE.**