



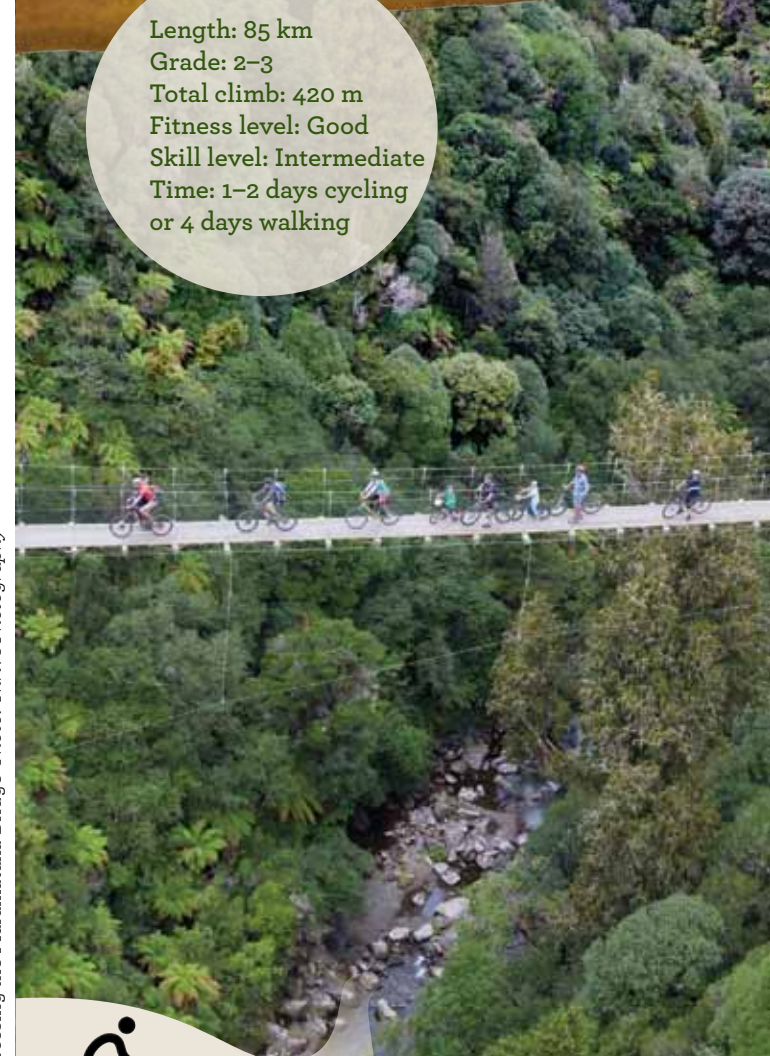
Timber Trail

Pureora – Ongarue

Trail guide



Length: 85 km
Grade: 2-3
Total climb: 420 m
Fitness level: Good
Skill level: Intermediate
Time: 1-2 days cycling
or 4 days walking



Cover: Crossing the Maramataha Bridge Photo: Thrive Photography



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



At forest edge shelter Photo: Nicky Palmer

DOC accommodation

Pureora Cabins

Seven cabins are available for rent, 250 m from start of Timber Trail. www.doc.govt.nz/pureora-cabins

Campsites

There are DOC campsites at Pureora and Piropiro. Camping is also permitted along the Trail in designated areas. www.doc.govt.nz/pureora.

Further information

Department of Conservation Te Kuiti Office, phone 64 7 878 1050. Or email tekuiti@doc.govt.nz. i-Sites/information centres located in Te Kuiti, Taumarunui, Taupo, Waitomo and Tokoroa

Accommodation and facilities

- www.paharakeke.co.nz
- www.blackfernllodge.co.nz
- www.pureoraforestlodge.org.nz
- www.awhinatours.co.nz
- www.artdoc.co.nz

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

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A backcountry cycling adventure

The Timber Trail between Pureora and Ongarue provides 85 km of cycling pleasure through magnificent native forest; across deep gorges (all bridged); along historic bush tramways; and through the Ongarue tunnel and spiral. The majority of the trail is in Pureora Forest Park, managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC).

The Timber Trail is one of 21 cycle trails developed as part of Nga Haerenga – The New Zealand Cycle Trail www.nzcycletrail.com.

It can also be walked – see the *Walking the trail* section of this brochure.

Getting there

The Timber Trail is an easy 1-2 hour drive from Rotorua, Taupo and Hamilton, with Napier, Palmerston North, New Plymouth and South Auckland in a 3-hour radius.

The trail begins on Barryville Road, Pureora, off SH30 between Te Kuiti and Mangakino. The central sections can be accessed from Piropiro campsite at the end of Kokomiko Road, Waimiha, and the southern end from Ongarue via SH4. Parking is available at all entry/exit points. It is 53 km by sealed road from Pureora to Ongarue, or 40 km by sealed/gravel road from Piropiro to Ongarue, for a vehicle pick up.



Walkers on the trail Photo: DOC

Riding the trail

The Timber Trail is open all year round. Adverse weather patterns can occur at any time of year, so go prepared for all conditions.

The first 4 km from Pureora is an easy flat gradient, but the trail then starts to climb and changes to intermediate (Grade 3) the rest of the way to Piropiro. It is Grade 2 either way between Piropiro and Ongarue.



There are a few steep ascents/descents and drop-offs in places that may require you to get off your bike and push. Be aware of hidden rocks or sticks, fallen trees or slippery clay exposed by the weather. Dappled light, sun or mist can affect your vision, so ride with care.

New Zealand Cycle Trail grades



Grade 2—Off-road trails that are predictable, i.e. no surprises, and mostly flat with some gentle climbs. Riders may be able to ride side-by-side at times, but there may also be sections requiring single file.



Grade 3—A generally narrow trail with some hills to climb, and obstacles may be encountered on the trail. There may be exposure on the edge of the trail. Suitable for riders with intermediate-level skills.

Things to note

Signs: Green and yellow DOC signs indicate access points, distances between places and approximate walking times. Take time to read these signs.

Trail markers: The trail is marked with orange directional markers and blue-and-white distance markers, indicating distances from Pureora. When travelling north from Ongarue, they count down the kilometres left to travel to Pureora. **If you do not see these markers, you are not on the trail!** Some points of interest occur near these markers and are referred to in this brochure.

Private land: Small sections of the trail cross private land. Please respect the landowners' rights.

Drinking water: Water can be taken from streams along the trail. You may wish to boil, filter or treat it before drinking.

Enjoy the environment: There are some beautiful sections of bush with tall trees, ferns and bird song. Take time to look and listen.

Plan and prepare

Safety is your responsibility. Use the 5 simple rules of the Outdoor Safety Code to help you stay safe.

Outdoor Safety Code

1. Plan your trip

Before you go, check the status of the Timber Trail at www.doc.govt.nz/timber-trail. Thoroughly clean and prepare your bicycle and equipment ensuring the brakes are operational, and take essential bicycle spares and tools.

2. Tell someone

Leave your intentions with someone. See www.adventuresmart.org.nz for further information.

3. Be aware of the weather

Check the forecast at www.metservice.com.

4. Know your limits

The trail is in a remote alpine environment with numerous old logging roads and is subject to weather extremes.

5. Take sufficient supplies

Pack enough warm clothing, extra food and a torch/head lamp to spend the night out if you have to. Have insect repellent, sun screen and a first aid kit. There is limited cell phone coverage on the trail. You may like to take a personal locator beacon (for hire outlets see www.beacons.org.nz).

See www.doc.govt.nz/pureora for more safety information.



Cyclists on the trail Photo: DOC



Map 1

Easier part-day options

For young families or riders with insufficient time or experience to ride the full trail, there are a number of options.

Map 1

Pureora to forest edge shelter and return (16 km). There are exit points at Cabbage Tree Rd (and Tui Rd) or you can return via Maraeroa Cycleway (23 km circuit).

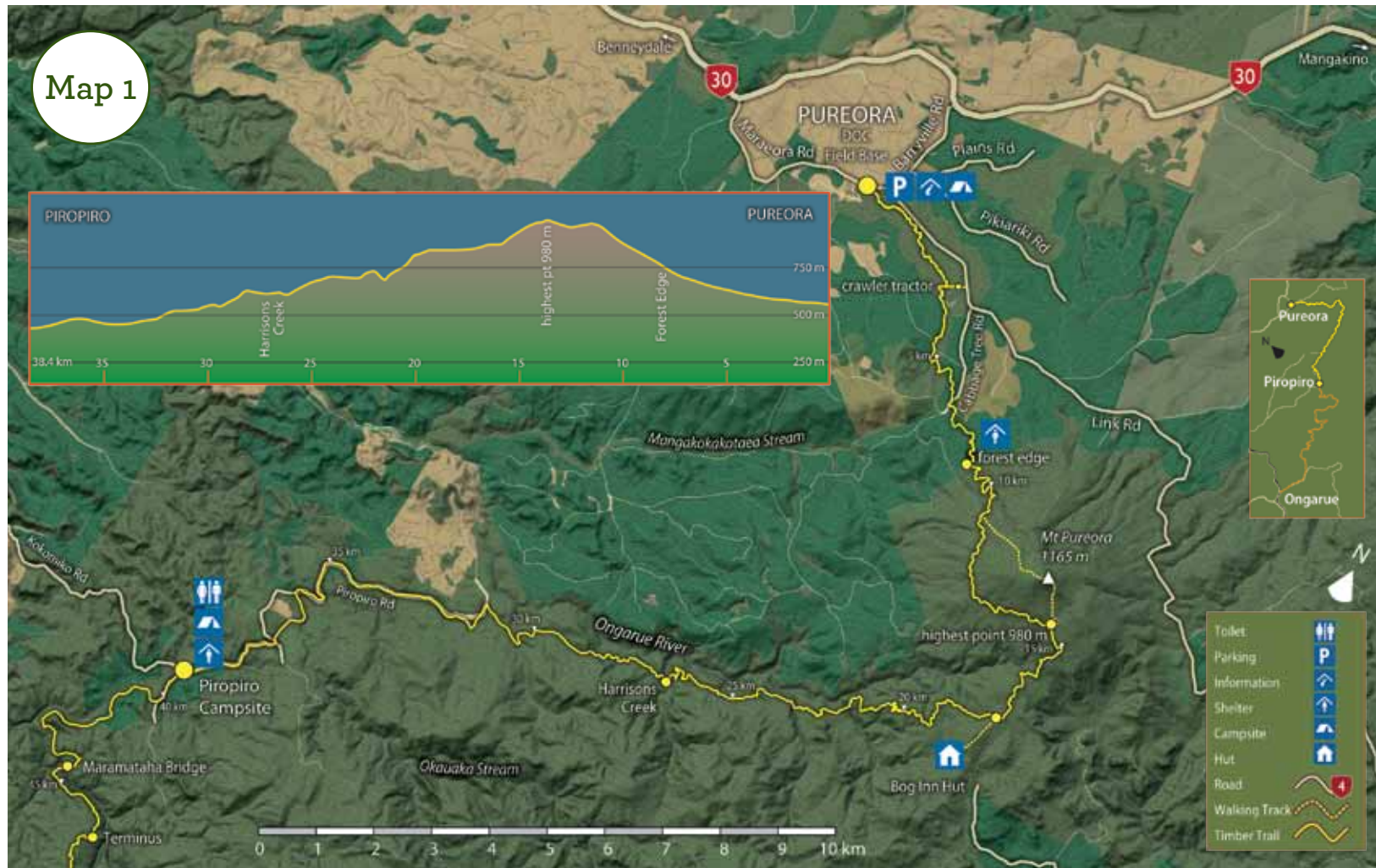
Crawler tractor loop (5 km)

Piropiro Campsite to Okauaka Stream (4 km one way)

Map 2

Piropiro Campsite to Maramataha Bridge and return (9 km)




Bennett Rd to Ongarue Spiral (15.5 km return) or to Mangatukutuku Bridge (25 km return)



At Ongarue Spiral

Note: Blue-and-white distance markers on the Timber Trail are used as points of reference in this brochure, but may not appear on the map.

Map 1: Pureora to Piropiro

40 km   13.5 hr walking 

Look out for

- Prince of Wales fern and Hall's tōtara
- The large rimu tree (at the 21 km mark)
- Whio/blue duck at the Okauaka Stream crossing

Listen for

- Kākā, tūī and North Island robin
- Fernbirds in the wetland (past the 37 km mark)

Access

Close to the DOC Pureora Field Base on Barryville Road, the Timber Trail starts out at an easy gradient, winding its way through beautiful podocarp forest for 4 km. (There is side track at about 3 km in to an old crawler tractor.) After crossing Cabbage Tree Rd, the trail climbs through regenerating bush to the forest edge shelter—a welcome spot to rest and enjoy the view.



This is also a sensible place to turn back if you have doubts about your ability to complete the entire trail safely.



A sign-posted tramping track past the 10 km marker leads to the summit of Mt Pureora (40 min uphill). Back on the Timber Trail, the trail climbs to the highest elevation of 980 m, and then it is predominantly downhill for the next 18 km. The trail crosses two suspension bridges, each over 100 m long, and follows an old logging road in part. It is strongly recommended that you walk the steep, rocky, downhill sections between the 26 and 27 km markers.

Across the suspension bridge over Harrison's Creek is a

good place for a picnic or to pitch a tent, with easy access to water. Just beyond here you can take a short side trip to a popular hunter's camp known as Angel's Rest. Past the 31 km mark, the trail goes on and off Piropiro Road. Although traffic is light, take extreme care on the road and at trail/road junctions.

A signposted track on the right just before the 40 km mark leads to the Piropiro campsite which has toilets, shelters and stream water.

Map 2: Piropiro to Ongarue

45 km  15 hr walking 

Look out for

- Interesting rock formations
- Logging relics, such as a sniped mataī log that didn't make it to the mill (at 57 km mark), an old log bogie seen from the Waikoura suspension bridge, or remains of the old curved viaduct seen from Mangatukutuku Bridge

From the Piropiro Campsite, ride 2 km to the bollards at the end of the road and then climb steadily through tawa, tānekaha and regenerating podocarp forest to the Maramataha Bridge, the longest and highest bridge on the trail at 141 m and 53 m, respectively. The trail then climbs up to the 'Terminus' clearing. This was as far north as the old Ellis and Burnand tramway went during the logging days. It is all downhill from here to Ongarue with another 18 bridges to cross!



Take care around the old Mystery Creek triangle (where locomotives were once turned), as quad bikes also use the trail between the 50 and 57 km markers.

Pass through the historic No 11 camp and travel a further 5 km to No 10 camp—once a large bush camp

for loggers—for an overnight stop. A 10-km gentle descent follows to the Ongarue Spiral. Cross the upper spiral bridge then through the tunnel (allow time for your eyes to adjust) and over the lower bridge before going down the side of the valley to the Mangakahu Stream. (Here the trail enters private land—please respect the landowner's rights). Exit from Bennett Road, turn right and follow the sealed road to the finish of the trail at Ongarue.



At Ongarue Spiral

Walking the trail

Allow 4 days to walk the full trail. If you have only 2 days, the section from Piropiro to Ongarue offers the best scenery, historic features and easiest gradient.

Walkers please give way to cyclists.

For day walks try:

Bennett Rd, Ongarue, to the Spiral (3 hr, 7.8 km)

Bennett Rd to Mangatukutuku Bridge (5 hr, 13 km)

Piropiro to Maramataha Bridge (2 hr, 4.5 km)

Pureora to forest edge shelter (3 hr, 8 km)

Pureora to Tui Rd (off Cabbage Tree Road) (2 hr 30 min, 6.9 km)

Tui Rd car park to Mt Pureora (2 hr 30 min, 5.7 km) part of Te Araroa walking trail

Note: All distances are one way



Map 2



- Toilet
- Parking
- Information
- Shelter
- Campsite
- Hut
- Road
- Walking Track
- Timber Trail

