

Plan and prepare

PAPAROA TRACK



Duration: **3 days hiking**
2 days mountain biking



Great Walks season:
All year

Distance **55.1 km hiking**
(one way): **56.2 km mountain biking**



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

PAPAROA TRACK

Experience our newest Great Walk – a purpose-built, shared-use hiking and mountain biking track within the Paparoa National Park on the West Coast of the South Island. This Great Walk crosses the Paparoa Range, taking you through alpine tops, limestone karst landscapes and thriving rainforests.

Once completed, the Pike29 Memorial Track will lead from the Paparoa Track to the site of the former Pike River Mine.

The Paparoa Track provides walking and cycling access through the remote and spectacular wilderness of the Paparoa National Park. The track is challenging in poor weather. You will need a good level of fitness and the right equipment.

The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough, and the track may be muddy. This brochure describes a 3-day hike for independent non-guided walkers travelling from Smoke-ho car park to Pororari River car park.

There is also a 4-day hike option, spending the first night at Ces Clark Hut. This is a good alternative for families.

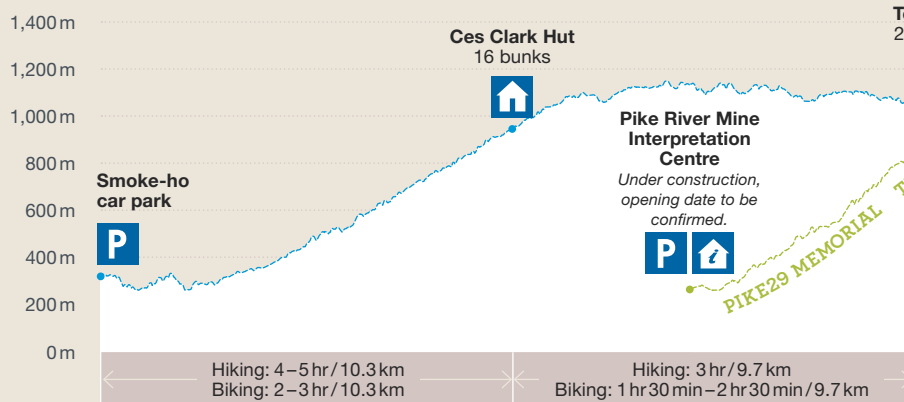


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Elevation profile & track guide



Day 1: Smoke-ho car park to Moonlight Tops Hut



Hiking: 7–8 hours, 20 km
Biking: 3 hr 30 min–5 hr 30 min, 20 km

The Great Walk begins at its southern end at Smoke-ho car park near Blackball, about a 45-minute drive from Greymouth. Beginning on the historic Croesus Track, with remnants of the area's gold mining history, the track ascends through beech and podocarp forest before reaching Ces Clark Hut.

This part of the track is much rougher than the rest of the Paparoa Track because of its historic nature.

Beyond the hut you pass through alpine scrub and tussock, and you will be rewarded with expansive views of Grey River/Māwheranui to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west. Moonlight Tops Hut provides spectacular views.

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Photo: Stewart Nimmo;
Photo: Jason Blair;
Photo: Shaun Barnett/Black Robin Photography

MAIN PHOTO: Photo: Stewart Nimmo

COVER: Photo: Jason Blair

Moonlight
Tops Hut
0 bunks



Paparoa
Track

Track under
construction,
opening date to
be confirmed.



car
park



hut



interpretation
centre

Pororari Hut
20 bunks



Pororari
River
car park
(exit for
hikers)



Inland
Pack Track
junction

Waikori
Road
car park
(exit for
bikers)



Hiking: 5–7 hr / 19.1 km
Biking: 4–5 hr / 19.1 km

Hiking: 4–5 hr / 16 km
Biking: 2 hr 30 min–3 hr 30 min, 17.1 km



Day 2: Moonlight Tops Hut to Pororari Hut



Day 3: Pororari Hut to Pororari River car park

➤ Hiking: 5–7 hours, 19.1 km
Biking: 4–5 hr, 19.1 km

On day 2, open tops give way to alpine forest stunted by the harsh environment. The Paparoa Track winds along the top of the escarpment, with steep cliffs and stunning views. About half-way to Pororari Hut, you descend from the escarpment through ancient podocarp forest. The track then follows the ridge above Tindale Creek to Pororari Hut. Keep an eye out for the Lone Hand, a gnarled outcrop of rock on the north side of the Pororari River.

➤ Hiking: 4–5 hours, 16 km
Biking: 2 hr 30 min–3 hr 30 min, 17.1 km

The Paparoa Track descends and follows the upper Pororari River valley, until it joins an old track built to establish settlement in the upper valley. The track sidles along a spectacular gorge and descends through beech forest interspersed with northern rātā. At the junction with the historic Inland Pack Track, hikers and mountain bikers diverge: hikers follow the track beside the Pororari River through the lower gorge; mountain bikers must exit into the Punakaiki River valley, ending at Waikori Road car park. Both pass through lush rainforest with glades of nīkau palms.



Mountain biking



Photo: Jason Blair

The Paparoa Track is a shared-use track for hikers and mountain bikers. This is the first purpose-built, shared-use Great Walk constructed by the Department of Conservation. Biking on the track is allowed year-round.

2 days and 1 night

Smoke-ho car park to Moonlight Tops Hut: 20 km, 3 hr 30 min – 5 hr 30 min

Moonlight Tops Hut to Waikori Road car park: 36.2 km, 6 hr 30 min – 8 hr 30 min

Note: Once the Pike29 Memorial Track is open, there will be route options that include the Pike River Mine Interpretation Centre.



MTB grade: Advanced (Grade 4)

A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and obstacles that are difficult to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.

Can I do it?

The Paparoa Track is a tough ride and not to be underestimated – to ride safely you need to be fit, experienced and have good equipment. This should include a well-maintained mountain bike, a comprehensive bike tool kit, quick release chain link, spare tube/fresh patch kit, pump/CO₂ pump, cable ties and duct tape. For a list of essential equipment, see www.mountainsafety.org.nz/activities/mountain-biking.

You can expect

A well-formed 56.2 km track maintained to Advanced: Grade 4 mountain biking standard, with numerous swing and suspension bridges.

Plan to spend one night on the track.

You will encounter changeable weather conditions, including extremely cold temperatures, rain, high winds and possibly snow; steep slopes and generally avoidable obstacles; and track sections that are prone to flooding.

Refer to the 'Know before you go' section of this brochure for more information.

Respect others, respect the rules, respect the track.

Follow the mountain biking rules below:

- You are not permitted to take a mountain bike into any hut or shelter, or onto hut porches.
- Stay on the formed and designated mountain bike tracks.
- Electric bikes are not allowed on the track.
- Bikers must give way to walkers.
- Night riding is prohibited to protect nocturnal wildlife.

You are responsible for:

- Obeying the mountain bikers code. The track is shared with hikers and other bikers – show respect for other users.
- Following signs and other markers that clearly identify where mountain bikes can be ridden and where they are not allowed.

Highlights

1

Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to bring birdsong back to our Great Walks.



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atihetea



AIR NEW ZEALAND

2

Photo: Stewart Nimmo (nimmophoto.co.nz)

3

Photo: Baptiste Maryns

4

Photo: Stewart Nimmo

5

Photo: Lynne Maguire

- 1 Explore the spectacular **Pororari River Gorge**, with dramatic limestone cliffs, beech forests and glades of subtropical nikau palms.
- 2 Sit back and enjoy **incredible sunsets** over the Tasman Sea from Moonlight Tops Hut.
- 3 Follow in the footsteps of gold miners on the **historic Croesus Track**. Take a side trip to Garden Gully to see gold-mining remains, including a 1930s miner's hut and a century-old quartz crushing battery (45 min return).
- 4 Admire the **stunning waharoa** at the Paparoa Track entrances and exits. These waharoa were carved by a team of Ngāti Waewae carvers, led by Mahana Coulston.

Conservation story

- 5 The Department of Conservation works in partnership with Air New Zealand (DOC's National Partner for Conservation) and the Paparoa Wildlife Trust in the south-east ranges bordering the Paparoa National Park to increase the size of existing populations of threatened native birds. These partnerships enable a pest-control trapping network to be maintained across 15,000 hectares of land. This programme, in conjunction with the 12.5-hectare pest-proof kiwi crèche on the Atarau plains and the Paparoa great spotted kiwi/roa project, is delivering significant gains for kiwi and many other species.

www.pwt.org.nz

Ka Manuhiri Tūāraki
To our esteemed visitors
Te Kāhui Whakaeke
From near and afar

Nau mai, Haere mai
Greetings and Welcome

Tauti mai rā
In awe of beauty

He Ara Pounamu
Paparoa

Ko Paparoa kai ruka
Trails of old

Ko Paparoa kai raro
Steeped in richness

Papaki ka Tai o Poutini
Waves glistening like Pounamu

Ka pō, ka ao ka awatea
from darkness, became light,
cometh the day

Tihei Mauriora
Share the breath of Life

Ka manu a Tāne
Our song of Tāne

He rau aroha
A teardrop of love

He ara Tīpuna
For our Departed

Paparoa te Whenua
Who lie in these Lands

Hei Hā!

Kāti Waewae,
Poutini Kāi Tahu

PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK

Remembering the Pike 29

The 29 men killed in the Pike River Mine disaster will be remembered in a number of ways. At the families' wishes, the mine site and surrounding area has become part of the Paparoa National Park.

A track from the Paparoa Track to the former mine site is currently under construction. This track has been dedicated to the men and named the Pike29 Memorial Track in their honour.

Planning is underway for a memorial and interpretation centre at the Pike River Mine site, where displays will tell the story of the mine and the 2010 disaster. The mine portal and associated memorial will be a place for remembrance and quiet reflection.

**OPENING DATE
TO BE CONFIRMED**

No public access to Pike29 Memorial Track

Access to the Pike29 Memorial Track is not possible or safe until after the official track opening.

At the time of printing this publication, large sections of the Pike29 Memorial Track are still under construction. The opening date is yet to be confirmed.

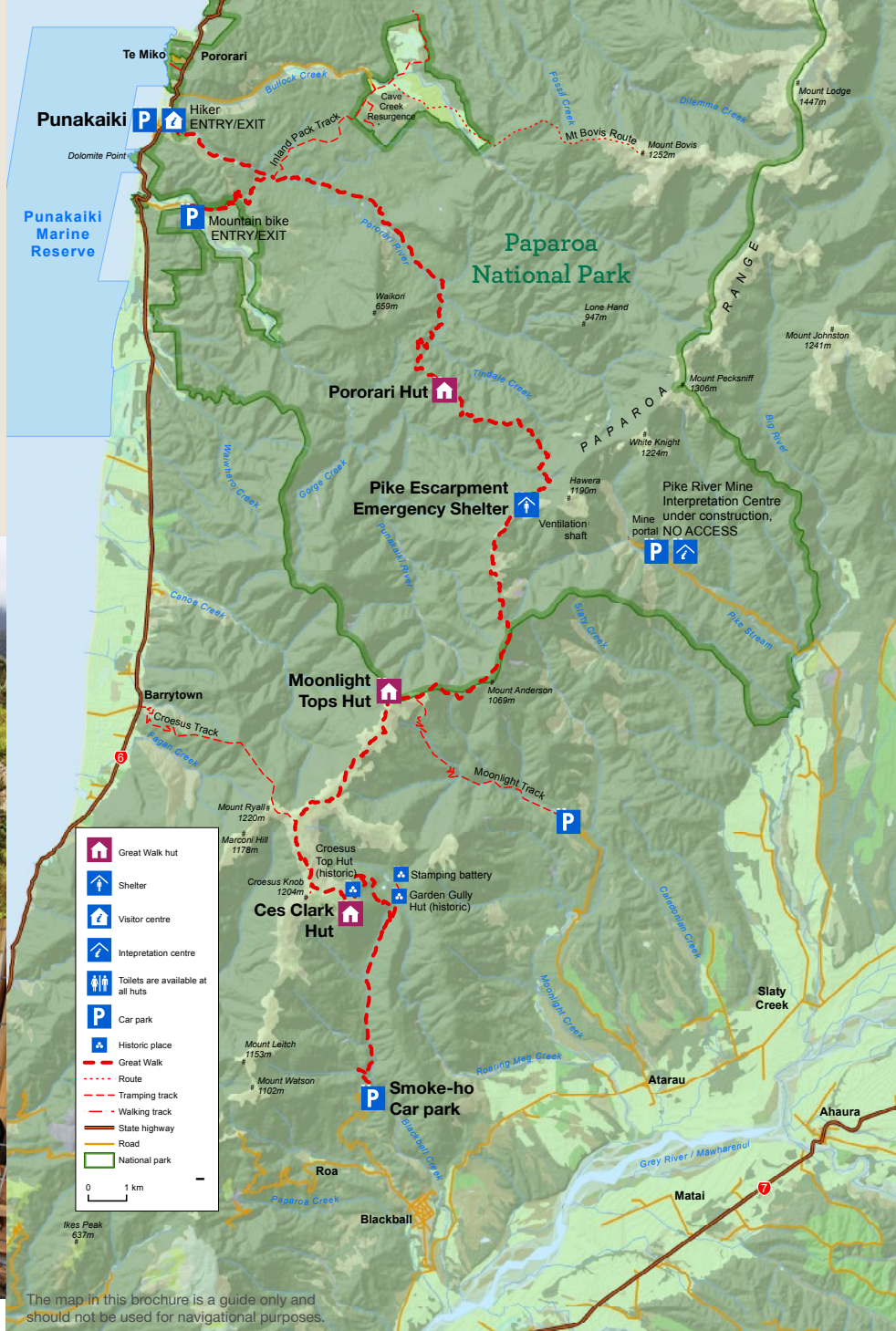
Visit www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for updates.



Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)



Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)



The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

Places to stay

There are three Great Walk huts on the Paparoa Track. Most walkers stay at Moonlight Tops Hut (20 bunks) and Pororari Hut (20 bunks), for the standard 2-night, 3-day journey. For the alternative 3-night, 4-day journey, walkers will also stay at Ces Clark Hut (16 bunks). All three huts must be booked in advance. There are no campsites.



Great Walks huts

Visit www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for prices.



Moonlight Tops Hut. Photo: Mark Neilson

What do I do next?



Start off at www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for more information.



Book your huts online at bookings.doc.govt.nz.



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – go to 'What to take' on the webpage for a list and make sure you have everything you need for a 3 day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack.



Check the weather, and make sure you've downloaded and printed your **ticket and official track guide**. You can also pick up a track guide and get the latest weather updates from the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre.



All set! Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on facebook.com/docgovtnz.

For in-depth local knowledge, visit:
Paparoa National Park
Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 731 1895

Email: paparoave@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks

This information was accurate at the time of printing. For the latest information on DOC's policies and facilities, visit www.doc.govt.nz.

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Getting there

The nearest towns are Blackball, Greymouth and Punakaiki. The track can be accessed by road at:

- **Smoke-ho car park** at the end of Blackball Road, 8 km north of Blackball
- **Pororari River Track car park** on SH6, 1.2 km north of the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki
- **Waikori Road car park** on SH6, 2.4 km south of the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki.

0 25 50 km



Safety on the Paparoa Track

- Go to www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack for detailed safety and planning information.
- Weather in the Paparoa National Park is changeable with annual rainfall averaging around 6,000 mm. Heavy rain can occur with little warning. Be prepared for rain, heavy fog, snow and high wind.
- Walkers should come well equipped and prepared for all weather conditions. Check weather.niwa.co.nz/parks for the most up-to-date forecast.
- Bad weather can damage the track significantly. Check www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack or contact the DOC Visitor Centres in Paparoa or DOC office in Greymouth for track conditions and weather warning before your walk.
- The track between Pororari Hut and Punakaiki can become impassable during times of heavy rain.
- If you are hiking or biking in winter, check snow and ice conditions before you leave and allow extra time. Consider changing your trip to another day if needed.

Your safety is your responsibility

Care for the Paparoa Track



Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed kea. Feeding wildlife is harmful to them. Follow any rules restricting fires, vehicles or boats. No dogs or unpermitted drones allowed.



Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you. Use toilets where provided. You can find them at all huts.



Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by following the Land Safety Code.

- ▶ Choose the right trip for you.
- ▶ Understand the weather.
- ▶ Pack warm clothes and extra food.
- ▶ Share your plans and take ways to get help.
- ▶ Take care of yourself and each other.



Show respect

Respect others, respect culture. Respect others by keeping common areas in the hut clean and tidy. Minimise noise when others are sleeping. Walkers and mountain bikers share the track. Bikers must give way to walkers. Book and pay for your accommodation to help maintain the track and facilities.



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