

Contact us

For the latest information, maps, brochures and hut tickets:

Department of Conservation

Waimakariri Area Office

Rangiora 7400
waimakariri@doc.govt.nz
(03) 313 0820

8.00 am – 5.00 pm (Monday to Friday)

DOC – Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre

SH 73, Arthur's Pass
arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz
(03) 318 9211

8.00 am – 5.00 pm (summer)

8.30 am – 4.30 pm (winter)

Every day except for Christmas Day
when the centre is closed

DOC – Christchurch Visitor Centre

Level 4, Torrens House
195 Hereford Street, Christchurch
christchurchvc@doc.govt.nz
(03) 341 9102

8.30 am – 5.00 pm (Monday to Friday)

Kaiapoi Visitor Information Centre

Kaiapoi Wharf, Charles St
info@kaiapoivisitorcentre.co.nz
(03) 327 3134

10.00 am – 5.00 pm (Monday to Friday)

10.00 am – 4.00 pm (Saturday and Sunday)

11.00 am – 4.00 pm (All public holidays except for
Christmas Day when the centre is closed)

Suggestions for corrections or
improvements should be emailed to:
recreation@doc.govt.nz



Foothills forests

Recreation in the Oxford,
Glentui, Mt Thomas and
Mt Grey/Maukatere forests



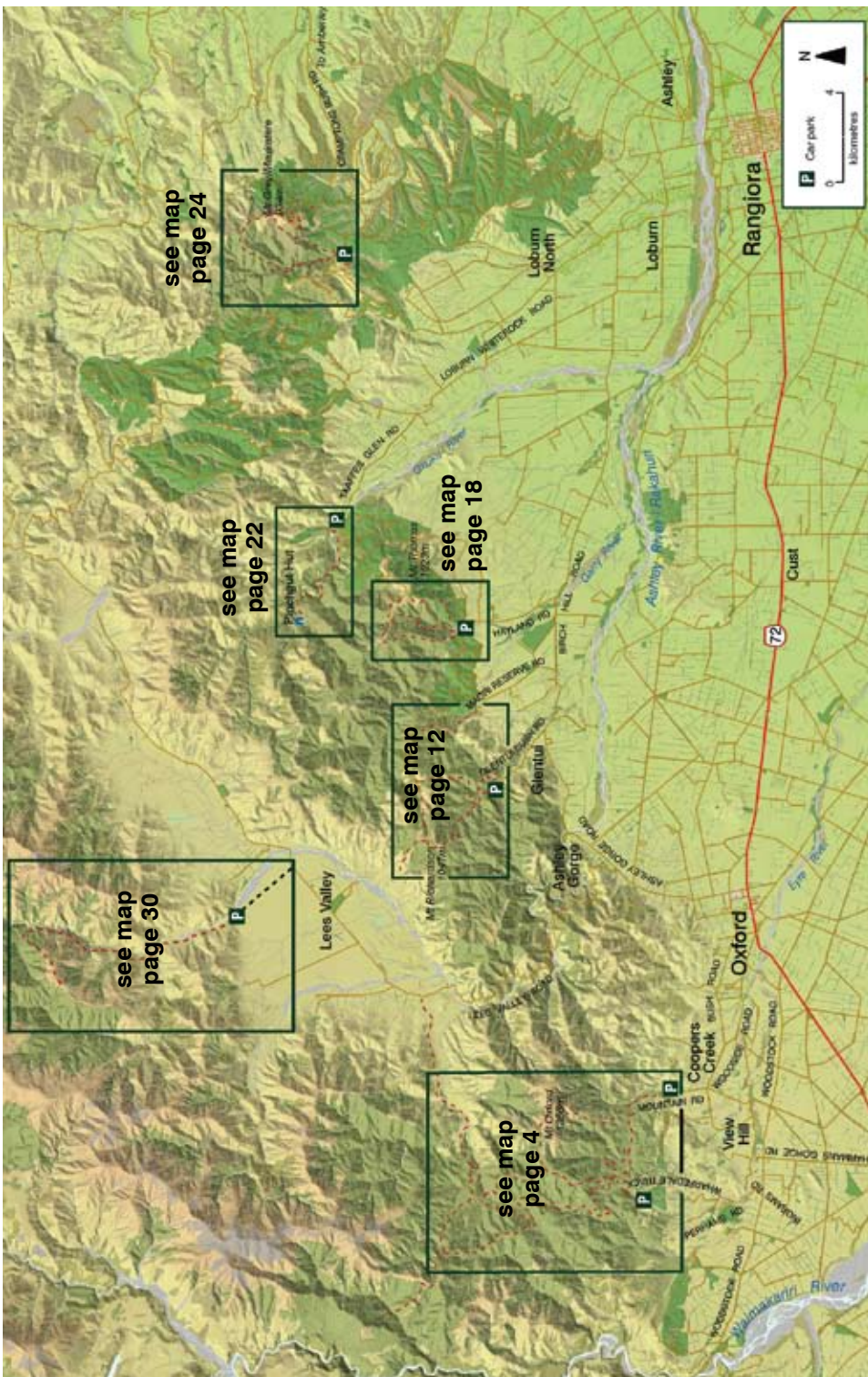
NORTH CANTERBURY



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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New Zealand Government



Mountain-bike track classifications

Grade 2

Mostly flat with some gentle climbs on smooth track with easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks and potholes



Grade 3

Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outside edge



Hut classifications

Standard hut

Bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses, toilet and water supply. 1 hut ticket per adult per night.



Basic hut

Basic shelter with limited facilities and services. Free



Track classifications

Short walk

Easy walking up to one hour
Track is well formed, with even surface
Few or no steps or slopes
Suitable for people of most abilities and fitness
Stream and river crossings are bridged
Walking shoes required



Walking track

Easy to moderate walking from a few minutes to a day
Track mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy
Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities
Clearly sign posted. Stream and river crossings bridged
Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots required



Easy tramping track

Moderate day or multi-day tramping/hiking
Track generally well formed, may be steep, rough or muddy. Suitable for people with moderate fitness and limited backcountry experience
Track has signs, poles or markers
Major stream and river crossings bridged
Light tramping/hiking boots required



Tramping track

Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking
Mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections
Suitable for people with good fitness
Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills required
Track has markers, poles or rock cairns
Expect un-bridged river and stream crossings
Tramping/hiking boots required



Route

Challenging overnight tramping/hiking
Track unformed and natural, may be rough and very steep
Suitable for people with above average fitness
High level of backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills required
Be completely self sufficient
Track has markers, poles or rock cairns
Expect un-bridged stream and river crossings
Sturdy tramping/hiking boots required



Unless stated, times and distances are one way. Times given are a guide only and will vary depending on weather and track conditions.



- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Take care with fires
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Enjoy your visit
- Toitu te whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)



Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other aquatic pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering a waterway, and when moving between waterways.

DOC HOTLine
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For more advice and more info

North Canterbury foothills forests



The valleys and ridgelines of Canterbury's foothills forests offer easy access to fantastic forest and alpine environments. Their location, at the foot of the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana within an hour's drive of Christchurch, makes these areas popular with trampers, picnickers, hunters and campers. Recreation opportunities range from interesting nature walks, to challenging tramping routes along exposed mountain tops.

The dominant forest cover is black beech/tawhairauriki at lower altitudes, giving way to mountain beech on higher slopes usually above 600 m. At lower altitudes there is a scattering of podocarp and hardwood broadleaf. Above the bush line subalpine shrub species such as *Dracophyllum* grow, gradually merging into alpine tussocks and high altitude herbs.

A characteristic of beech forests is the black sooty fungus covering the trees. This is caused by beech scale insects which play a vital role in the food supply for a range of native bird and insect species. This native insect lives in the bark of beech trees drawing off the sap. It then excretes sugary liquid drops known as 'honeydew' via a fine hair-like tube. Sooty mould fungi grow on waste honeydew that has run down tree trunks forming a dark sponge-like covering.

Safety is your responsibility

Plan and prepare

Have the right and latest information
Take a topographic map if going into more challenging country (i.e. something more than a tramping track). The foothill forests are covered on the following maps:

Puketeraki – map series 260 Sheet L34 covers the entire Oxford Forest Conservation Area and part of the Mt Thomas Conservation Area as far as Glentui and Mt Richardson.

Amberley – map series 260 Sheet M34 covers the rest of Mt Thomas Conservation Area and the Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area.

Note: These maps will be replaced by the new Topo50 map series, using NZTM2000 at 1:50,000 scale, in September 2009.



Weather

Always be prepared for sudden weather changes. Check the latest forecast, especially if any river crossings are required.

Equip yourself well

Prepare for the worst with enough food/water and the right clothing.

Let someone know before you go

Ensure someone else knows where you are going and when you plan to return.

If staying in huts, fill in the intentions book – this may save your life.

Fire

Immediately dial 111 for any fire emergency.

Always take care when lighting fires and use the permanent fireplaces provided.

During periods of extreme fire risk, fires and barbecues will be prohibited; in some areas tracks may even be closed.

Wasps



Introduced wasp numbers are particularly high from January through to April each year when they compete with native birds and bees in the honeydew-rich beech forests.

Carry antihistamine cream and tablets as a precaution.

Wasps are attracted to food – cover food and keep lids on sweet drinks.

Wear light-coloured clothing as wasps are more likely to attack dark-coloured objects if their nest is disturbed.

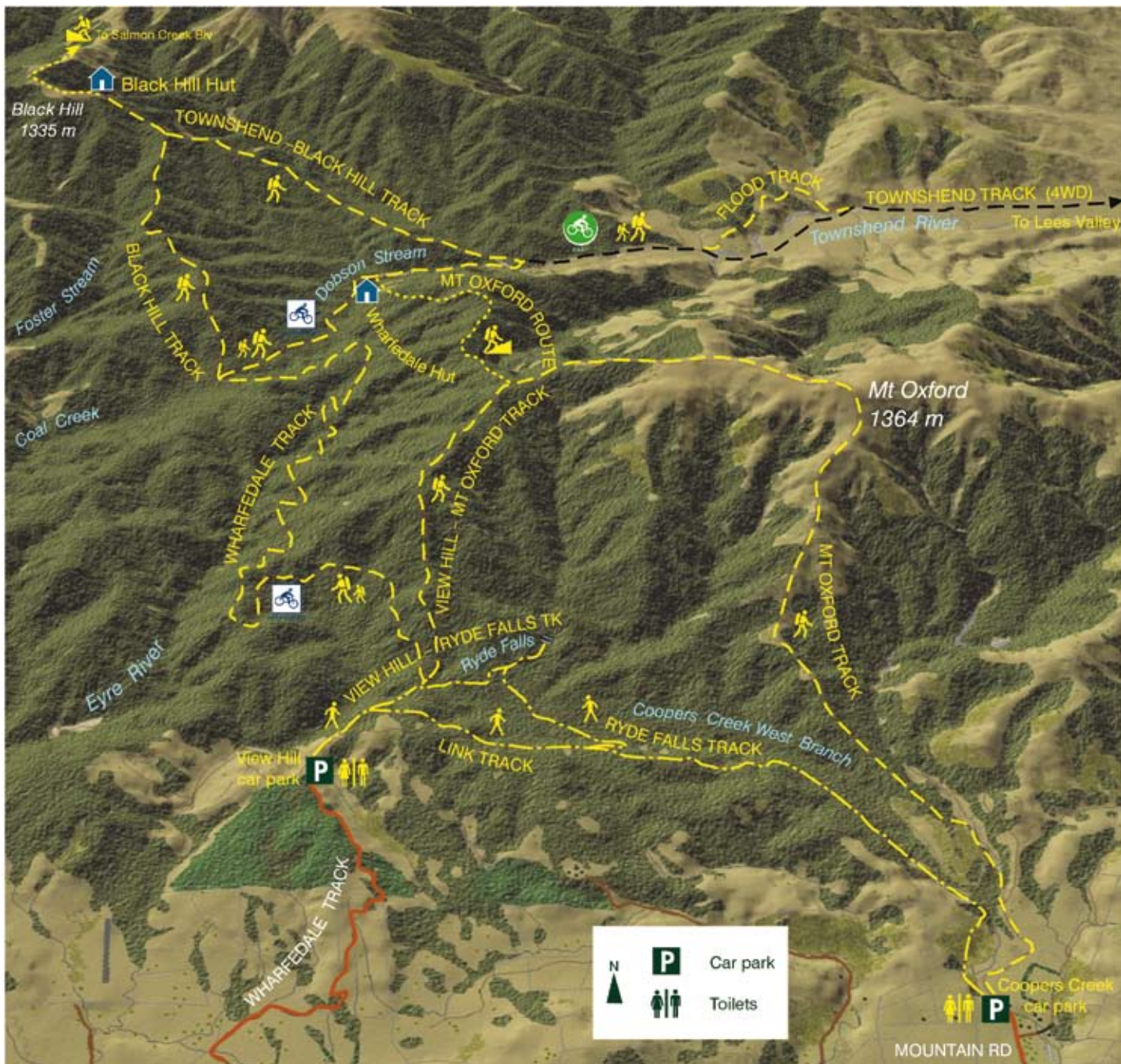
Accommodation

All huts in this area operate on a 'first come' basis. Be prepared to either sleep on the floor or in a tent. It is recommended to at least carry a sleeping mat and/or a tent.

Final check

Check the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz/notices, or contact your closest DOC/i-SITE visitor centre for the latest track updates before leaving.

Oxford Forest Conservation Area



Oxford Forest Conservation Area



This 11,350-hectare forest is a remnant of the great beech and podocarp forests that once cloaked inland northern Canterbury.

The forest was a source of abundant food for the local Māori of Ngāi Tūāhuriri, who travelled from Kaiapoi pā on food-gathering expeditions. Tawera is the Māori name for the area which means 'hot blow' – no doubt attributed to the infamous Canterbury nor'west winds.

The forest's magnificent timber later led to the growth of the Oxford township, which had 11 sawmills operating in the area by the mid 1870s. Two major fires fanned by strong nor'west winds in 1898 resulted in the decline of the sawmilling industry, with the last mill of that era closing in 1912. A panel on the Coopers Creek to Ryde Falls track tells the rich sawmilling history in this area.

Formed walking tracks take you through mountain beech and scattered podocarp remnants of rimu, kaikahikatea, matai and tōtara.

Getting there

Oxford township is about 56 km north-west of Christchurch via the northern motorway (SH 1) then westward on Tram Road or SH 72. From Oxford township there are four road approaches to the Oxford Forest Conservation Area.

Coopers Creek car park

At the western end of Oxford, turn into Woodside Road. After about 8 km turn right into Mountain Road which leads to the Coopers Creek car park.

View Hill car park

From Oxford drive west on SH 72 for about 2 km, then turn right into Woodstock Road. After about 10 km, turn right up Ingrams Road which turns left into Perhams Road. An AA sign indicates the turn-off to the start of the Wharfedale Track where the View Hill car park is located. In times of heavy rain two fords on Perhams Road may become impassable. Leave gates as you find them on this road.

Eyre River area

From Oxford drive west on SH 72 for about 3 km, then turn off along Woodstock Road. After about 14 km take the road

leading right (Trig Road). This passes a small exotic pine forest before crossing a ford close to the forest edge.

Lees Valley

About 6 km north of Oxford, on Ashley Gorge Road is the turn-off to Lees Valley. The road winds through a steep gorge to Lees Valley. About 1.5 km after the Lees Valley Bridge, a DOC signpost marks the start of Townshend Track. This is a 4WD drive track that runs next to the Townshend River for about 7 km through farmland, until you reach the forest.

For permission and information about vehicle access along this 4WD track, contact the Mt Pember Station office on (03) 312 4351 between 8 am and 2 pm, Monday to Friday.

Note: This track may be closed to vehicles during lambing or other farming operations and dogs are not permitted on farmland at any time. Foot and mountain-bike access is permitted year round.

Walking tracks

Coopers Creek to Ryde Falls Track

Walking time: 3 hours one way, 7 km



From Coopers Creek car park, this well-formed track initially crosses cleared private land with views of the plains and surrounding hills. It enters the beech forest and finally descends to Coopers Creek to view the five-tier Ryde Falls. A panel by the, now closed, Ryde Tramway tells of the area's rich sawmilling history.

Note: Keep to the marked track when crossing private land.

View Hill to Ryde Falls Track

Walking time: 2 hours one way, 3 km

Take Wharfedale Track from View Hill car park. Turn off about 20 minutes into the forest from the car park. Descend to Coopers Creek to view Ryde Falls.

View Hill to Coopers Creek (via link track)

Walking time: 3 hours one way, 7 km

To take this link track, turn off Wharfedale Track about 10 minutes into the forest from the car park and join Ryde Falls Track. Follow this track east to Coopers Creek car park.

Easy tramping tracks

Wharfedale Track

Walking time: 5 hours, 15 km
Mountain-biking time: 3 hours



This track was formed originally as a stock route with the intention of eventually becoming a road linking the plains with Lees Valley. Work began in 1879 but after seven years it was abandoned as a possible road.

The track sidles and gently climbs through beech forest to the saddle. It is then mostly downhill to Wharfedale Hut close to Dobson Stream.

Wharfedale Hut (right) is a standard 8-bunk hut with mattresses and heating (one hut ticket/night).



Townshend Track

Wharfedale Hut to Lees Valley
Walking time: 2 hours, 30 minutes one way, 8.5 km



About half an hour after leaving Wharfedale Hut, the track opens out and follows a 4WD track over grazed flats coming out at Lees Valley Road. This track crosses the Townshend River twice and may be impassable if river levels are high. There is a flood route between Shifton and Storm streams and may be used in emergencies. It is not well marked but avoids the need to cross the Townshend River. It is not suitable for mountain bikes.

Tramping tracks

Mt Oxford Track

Time: 4 hours one way



Mt Oxford Track takes you from Coopers Creek car park to the summit of Mt Oxford.

From the car park, cross Coopers Creek and follow the marked track to the bridge over the east branch of Coopers Creek. Climb gradually through scattered pockets of beech forest, and then more steeply through snow tussock. From the summit of Mt Oxford (1364 m) there are good views of the Canterbury Plains and into Lees Valley.

An alternate descent returns to the car park at View Hill, or you can loop back to Coopers Creek car park via Ryde Falls Track. (7–8 hours round trip).

Black Hill Track

Time: 3 hours one way

Begin at Wharfedale Track junction north of the saddle between the Eyre and Townshend catchments. Climb steeply onto the ridge between Foster and Dobson streams. Black Hill Hut is a standard 6-bunk hut with mattresses and heating (one hut ticket/night).

Townshend to Black Hill Track

Time: 3 hours one way

Start at the confluence of the Townshend River and Dobson Stream and climb a beech-covered ridgeline to Black Hill Hut.

View Hill to Mt Oxford Track

Time: 4 hours one way

Branch off Wharfedale Track about 20 minutes from View Hill car park. Follow the ridge through forest eventually opening onto tussock grassland as you head towards Mt Oxford summit.

Routes

Mt Oxford Route

Time: 3 hours one way



Route from Wharfedale Hut to the junction of View Hill and Mt Oxford Track. From here you can descend to either View Hill car park or carry on to the summit and then descend to Coopers Creek car park.

Salmon Creek Route

Time: 2 hours one way – downhill

From Black Hill Hut, a marked route leads over Black Hill and down to Salmon Creek Biv. Salmon Creek Biv is a basic hut (no charge) and sleeping mats are required.

Places to stay

Wharfedale Hut – standard 8-bunk hut (1 hut ticket/night)

Black Hill Hut – standard 6-bunk hut (1 hut ticket/night)

Salmon Creek Biv – basic 2-bunk biv (no charge)

Other activities

Mountain biking

The Wharfedale and Townshend tracks are suitable for mountain biking, classified as intermediate and easy respectively. Through the forest the track surface provides technical riding over roots and rocks and bikes need to be carried over small creeks, but the majority is easily ridden. Townshend Track mainly follows a 4WD track to Lees Valley.

Hunting

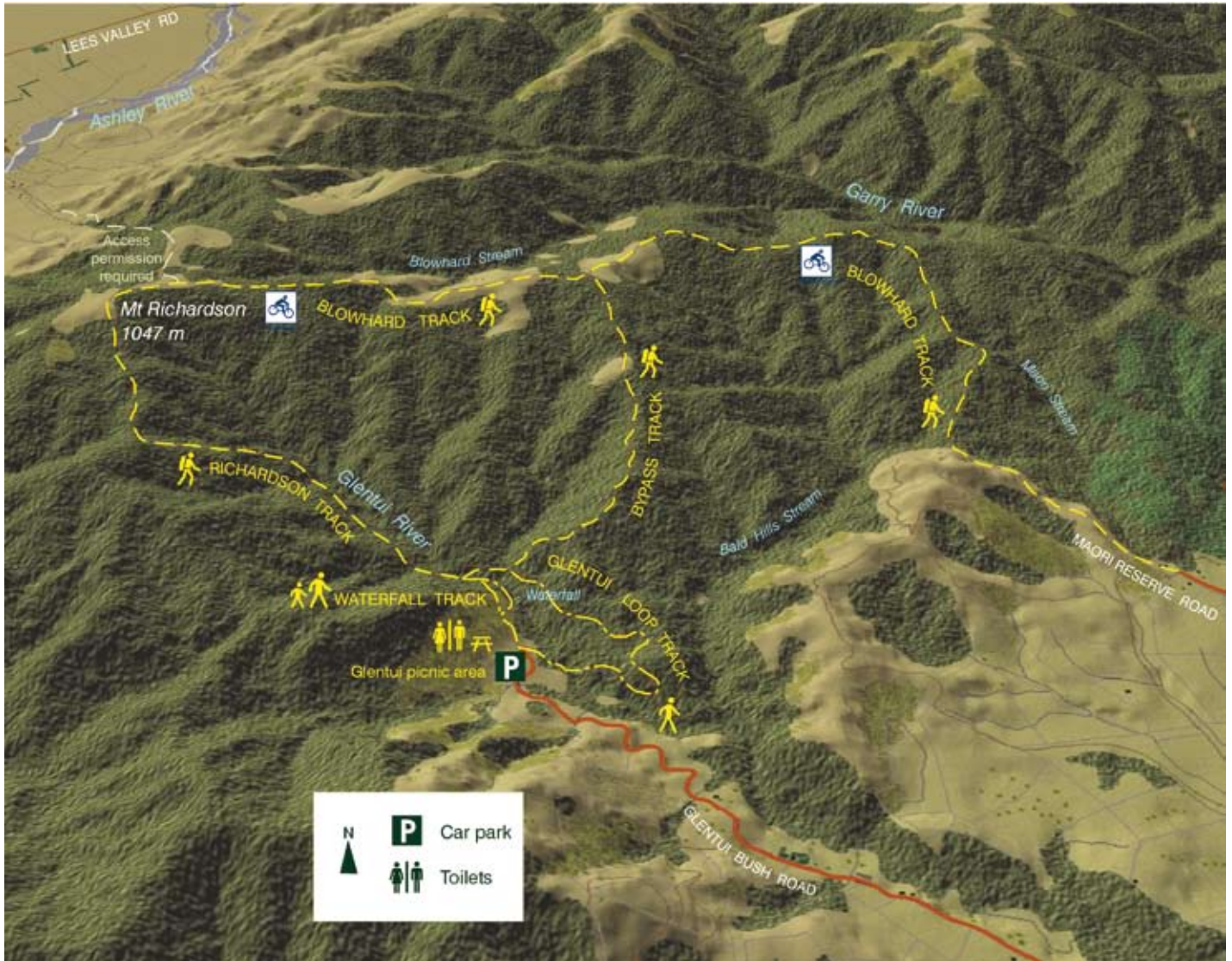
Hunting permits and firearms licences are available from any Canterbury Conservancy DOC office. You must have a firearms licence to hunt on public conservation land. A PDF map and fact sheet about the Oxford Forest hunting block is available on the DOC website (enter "oxford hunting" in the search box), or from any DOC office.

Dogs

Dogs (excluding hunting dogs which are covered in a separate hunting permit) are permitted on tracks only as far as Black Hill Hut as kiwi are believed to be present in the Puketeraki Range. Dogs must be on a leash at all times. It is important to clean up after your dog.



Glentui and Mt Richardson (Mt Thomas Forest Conservation Area)



Glentui

The Glentui picnic area and tracks on Mt Richardson are part of the 10,800-ha Mt Thomas Forest Conservation Area. The Glentui area includes a pleasant picnic area with very easy family walks, through to day walks, along the ridgelines of Mt Richardson. The conservation area is bounded by the Ashley River to the south. The Ashley Gorge Recreation Reserve (Waimakariri District Council) on the south bank is a very popular picnic and camping area. There are great swimming holes here and opportunities for experienced users to raft and kayak from the Middle Bridge in Lees Valley.

In the Glentui - Ashley Gorge area you can see remnants of the native vegetation that once existed throughout the region, including native tawhai/beech forest, scattered podocarp forests, tussock fields and *Dracophyllum* scrub.



Getting there

The area is about 60 km northwest of Christchurch and is reached either from Oxford or Loburn and can make an interesting round trip. From Oxford the turn-off to Glentui Bush Road is about 5 km further from Ashley Gorge. From Loburn, take the signposted road to Oxford for about 22 km to the Glentui Bush Road turn-off. The winding, gravel Glentui Bush Road emerges at the Glentui picnic area after about 4 km.

Walking tracks

Glentui Waterfall Track

Walking time: 15 min one way, 350 m

Signposted from the Glentui picnic area, this easy, well-graded track leads to a lookout providing an impressive



view of a beautiful waterfall on the Glentui River. Suitable for family groups of all ages.

Glentui Loop Track

Walking time: 1 hour return, 2 km

This is a loop track and it is recommended to walk it in an anti-clockwise direction. From the Glentui picnic area this track descends to a bridge over the Glentui River then climbs a ridge on the other side. The first section is steep in places and there are a few major drop-offs before reaching the ridge. The track links first with Bypass Track, then Richardson Track before returning to the picnic area. This is a family walk suitable for people of moderate fitness, but good footwear is required.



Tramping tracks

Richardson Track

Walking time: 3 hours one way

Starting at the Glentui picnic area, this moderate to steep track climbs first through mountain beech/tawhai forest and then through tussock grasslands and *Dracophyllum* scrub on the upper slopes of Mt Richardson (below). From the trig (1047 m) there are great views across to the Puketeraki Range and over Lees Valley. From here it is possible to continue to Bypass Track to form a loop back to the Glentui picnic area, or continue further down Blowhard Track to come out on Maori Reserve Road.

A good track for people with moderate fitness. Mountain bikes are not permitted on this track.



Blowhard Track

Walking time: 4 hours one way (from Maori Reserve Road to Mt Richardson trig)

Mountain-biking time: 3 hours (uphill)



Mountain bikes and horses are permitted on this track only, it is important to be mindful of other users.

This track, once a stock route to Lees Valley, starts at the end of Maori Reserve Road near the Boys Brigade Camp. It takes 3–4 hours to ascend to the summit of Mt Richardson (1047 m). The lower portion climbs a wind-swept ridge through tall open forest and emerges through stunted tawhai onto open grasslands. Skeleton tree trunks along the top ridge are a legacy of wildfire from a lightning strike which swept up from the Lees Valley in 1980. About 500 m before the Mt Richardson trig there is a turn-off to Lees Valley. This section of track is not maintained by DOC and permission is required from Mt Pember Station to cross farm land. Contact the station office on (03) 312 4351 between 8 am and 2 pm, Monday to Friday.

Bypass Track

Walking time: 1–2 hours one way (downhill)

Richardson and Blowhard tracks are linked by a bypass track which starts near the mid-point of Blowhard Track. It follows a ridge down the eastern side of the Glentui River catchment, to emerge on Glentui Loop Track. The round trip from the Glentui picnic area via Richardson, Blowhard, and Bypass tracks is a 4–6 hour walk. It is recommended to walk this in a clockwise direction as Bypass Track is steeper than Richardson Track.

Mountain bikes and horses are not permitted on Bypass Track.

Other activities

Mountain biking

Blowhard Track provides mountain bikers with a challenging ascent once you enter the forest. The track is steep and rough in places and bikes may need to be carried at times. It then flattens out as you follow the ridgeline to the trig at the summit of Mt Richardson. Return the same way, as mountain bikes are not permitted on Richardson or Bypass tracks.

Kayaking

Ashley Gorge is a popular river for kayaking and rafting. Ashley Gorge, below Middle Bridge (approximately half way along the Lees Valley Road), is popular with kayakers.

Hunting

A hunting permit is available from any Canterbury Conservancy DOC office. You must have a firearms licence to be issued with a permit to hunt on public conservation land. A PDF map and factsheet covering the Mt Thomas hunting block is available on the DOC website (enter “mt thomas hunting” in the search box), or from any DOC office. In particular note the access routes to this block.

Dogs

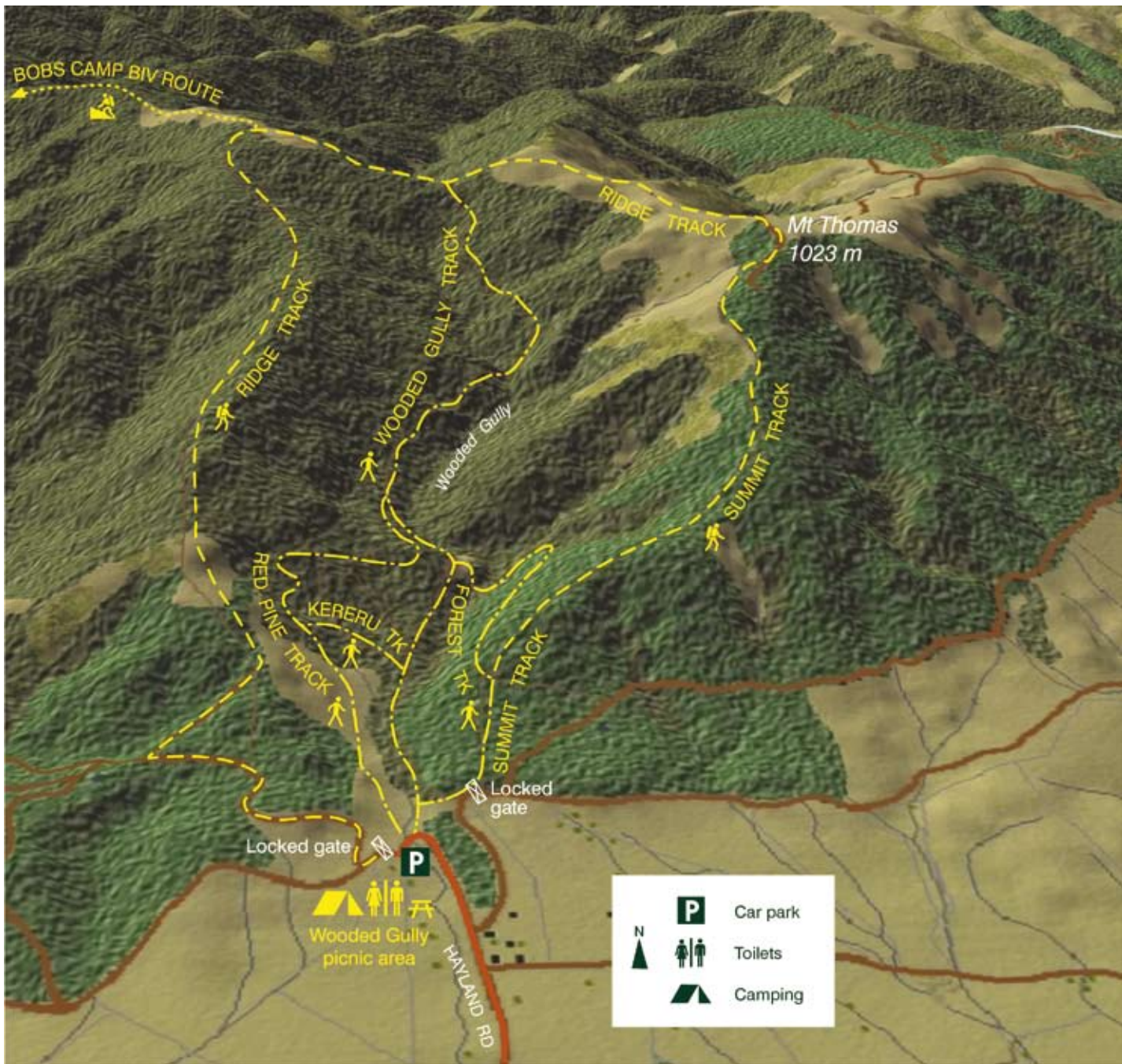
Dogs (excluding hunting dogs which are covered in a separate hunting permit) are permitted on tracks and in the picnic area only. Dogs must be on a leash at all times. It is important that you clean up after your dog.



Photo: S Mankelow



Mt Thomas Forest Conservation Area



Mt Thomas Forest Conservation Area



The Mt Thomas Forest Conservation Area covers 10,800 hectares of native tawhai/beech and scattered podocarp forests between the Ashley and Okuku rivers. This section refers to the public conservation land between the Garry and Okuku rivers, covering the tracks up Mt Thomas, Wooded Gully picnic area and Pinchgut Track.

Wooded Gully is a popular family picnicking and camping area with Wooded Gully Stream running through it and views over the Canterbury Plains. It is also the starting point for a network of walks and tracks ranging from one-hour family walks to a full-day traverse of the area.

On either side of the Mt Thomas tracks are privately owned commercial forests. This is not public conservation land and there is no vehicle access to the forestry roads. Two of the tracks pass through sections of commercial forest, so please keep to the tracks and note that fires are prohibited in these areas. Signs will indicate when these tracks are closed for forestry operations or in cases of extreme fire danger. Be respectful of these for your own safety.

Getting there

Wooded Gully picnic area is about 65 km north-west of Christchurch and is reached either from Oxford or Loburn. From Oxford continue on the road past Ashley Gorge and the Glentui Bush Road turn-off to Hayland Road, a further 5 km on. From Loburn, take the signposted road to Oxford for about 16 km to the Hayland Road turn-off. Wooded Gully picnic area is about 4 km away at the end of Hayland Road.

Walking tracks

Kereru Track via Wooded Gully/Red Pine tracks

Walking time: 1 hour return, 2.2 km

Loop walk via Wooded Gully/Kereru/Red Pine tracks.

From the picnic area follow Wooded Gully Track for 20 minutes until you reach the junction of Kereru Track. Turn left to follow this track until it links up with Red Pine Track. Turn left onto this track to return to the car park. This walk is suitable for family groups.



Forest Track via Wooded Gully/Summit tracks

Walking time: 2 hours return, 2.8 km

Loop walk via Wooded Gully/Forest Track/Summit Track.

From the picnic area follow Wooded Gully Track for about 45 minutes until you reach the Forest Track turn-off. Turn right onto Forest Track and follow this through beech forest to join up with Summit Track. Return to the picnic area via the lower section of Summit Track. Suitable for families of moderate fitness. There is a steep 300 m section after the bridge on Forest Track.

Wooded Gully Track

Walking time: 3 hours one way, 5.3 km

From Wooded Gully picnic area walk up Wooded Gully Track through beech forest to the saddle west of the Mt Thomas summit. This is a popular walk with the whole track passing through native forest to the saddle and crossing the stream twice. From the saddle you can return the same way, climb to the summit of Mt Thomas and return via Summit Track, or follow Ridge Track back to Wooded Gully picnic area past the Bobs Camp Biv turn-off.

Red Pine Track via Wooded Gully Track

Time: 3 hours return, 5 km

Red Pine Track starts on the western side of Wooded Gully Stream at the campground end of Wooded Gully picnic area. The track follows the stream through beech forest for about 1½ hours until it joins up with Wooded Gully Track. Just before the track swings right towards Wooded Gully there is a large rimu (red pine) that is well worth a look as it is one of the few remaining in this forest.

For a shorter walk, take the Kereru Track link to reach Wooded Gully – this will give you an hour-long loop walk.

Tramping tracks

Summit Track

Time: 3 hours one way to summit

From the picnic area follow Summit Track up a steep ridge to the summit of Mt Thomas (1023 m) for sweeping panoramic views of the Canterbury Plains, Banks Peninsula and the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana. Come back the same way or return to the car park via either Wooded Gully or Ridge tracks, which are clearly signposted from the summit.



Ridge Track

Times: (all times one way)

3 hours to Bobs Camp Biv Route turnoff

5 hours to Mt Thomas Summit

Ridge Track starts on the western side of Wooded Gully Stream, at the campground end of Wooded Gully picnic area. Follow the markings on the forestry road uphill for 1.8 km until you enter the beech forest. Follow the ridge up to the Bobs Camp Biv track junction. This is the highest point of the ridge before it heads in an easterly direction to Mt Thomas Summit. Wooded Gully and Summit tracks branch off this track and you can take either back to the picnic area.

Pinchgut Track

Time: 3 hours, 30 minutes one way



Access this track from the Loburn – Whiterock Road. Near Whiterock turn left onto Taaffes Glen Road and follow the road until you reach Round Hill Stream where there is a small parking area among the beech trees. Leave all farm gates as you find them.

Walk along the gravel road for a further 300 m then take a track that drops down to the Okuku River. Cross the river, picking up a marked track leading to a clearing. Turn right and follow another short section of marked track. Turn right onto a vehicle track, following it for 400 m, then left onto a benched track above Okuku River. Along this section you pass through an impressive stand of kānuka. Two large landslips are bypassed by walking along the edge of the river. Beyond Whare Stream the track climbs steeply, then sidles along the hillside to Pinchgut Hut (right).



Routes

Bobs Camp Biv Route

Time: 5 hours one way

(Wooded Gully picnic area to route junction on Ridge Track – 3 hours,
Ridge Track junction to Bobs Camp Biv – 2 hours)

From Wooded Gully picnic area, follow Wooded Gully Track until you reach the saddle at the head of the valley. Turn left and follow Ridge Track until you reach the sign marking the start of Bobs Camp Biv Route. From the sign follow the marked route along the ridgeline, dropping steeply into beech forest. Follow the undulating route north-west along the ridgeline until you reach a tussock clearing above Cattle Peak Stream. From here follow the poled route down to Bobs Camp Biv. Water can be obtained from the upper tributaries of the Cattle Peak Stream.

Places to stay

Wooded Gully (Mt Thomas) campsite

This is a popular family campsite with three sheltered terraces for up to 50 tent sites.

It is a standard campsite with: toilets, water supply, mown grass, vehicle access and picnic tables.

Fees per night: Adult: \$6; Child (5–17 years) \$3; Infants (0–4 years) free.

Pinchgut Hut – standard 7-bunk hut (1 hut ticket/night)

Bobs Camp Biv – basic 2-bunk biv (no charge)

Other activities

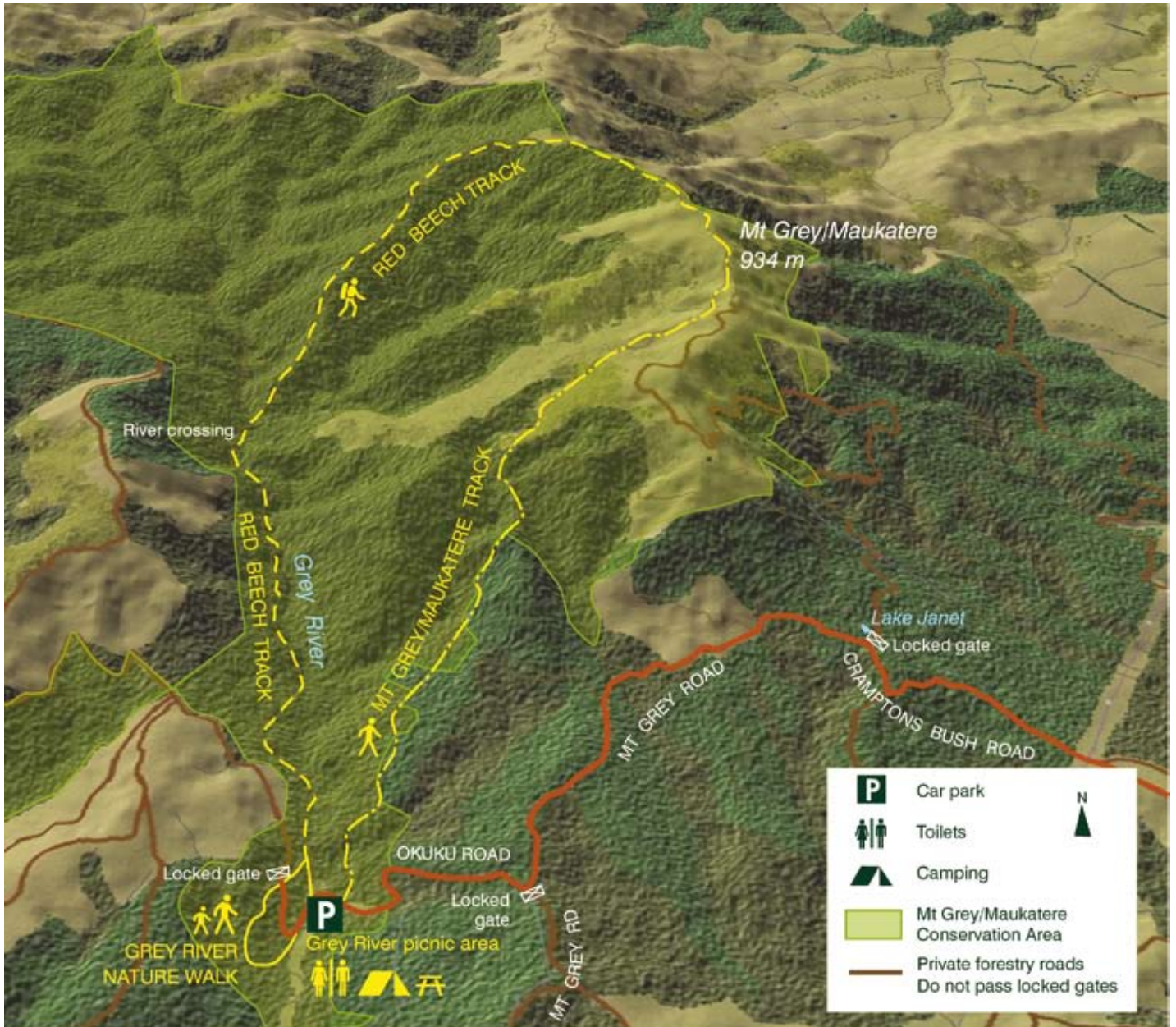
Hunting

A hunting permit is available from any Canterbury Conservancy DOC office. You must have a firearms licence to be issued with a permit to hunt on public conservation land. A PDF map and information factsheet covering the Mt Thomas hunting block is available on the DOC website (enter “mt thomas hunting” in the search box), or from any DOC office. In particular please note the access routes to this block.

Dogs – are permitted in the Mt Thomas picnic area and on tracks but must be on a leash at all times. Hunting dogs are only permitted when the owner is issued with a valid permit, which is issued at the same time as a hunting permit.



Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area



Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area



The Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area comprises approximately 1,700 hectares of remnant native forest and tussock grasslands within the Ashley Forest. Ashley Forest is a privately owned commercial forestry plantation and public access is restricted to the Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area only.

Mt Grey is named after Sir George Grey, Governor and Premier of New Zealand between 1845 and 1879. In Māori legend Maukatere is believed to be the puka (anchor) of the waka (canoe) that Aoraki and his three brothers travelled in. When the canoe capsized the brothers climbed onto the side of the waka and waited so long for someone to rescue them that their hair turned white and their bodies became as hard as stone. Eventually they became the snow-capped mountain range known as Kā Tiritiri o Te Moana (The Southern Alps). The canoe became the land we live on today, Te Waipounamu (South Island), but the ancient name the ancestors gave the land was Te Waka o Aoraki (the canoe of Aoraki). Māori named the mountain 'Maukatere' (floating mountain) because the spirits of the dead are believed to leave from the summit on the long journey to Cape Reinga.

Tracks provide visitors with a range of walks through remnant native tawhai/ beech and podocarp forest. Clematis vines (right) are a prominent feature of the Mt Grey/Maukatere area with their eye-catching treetop display of white flowers during spring.



Getting there

Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area is 15 km east of Amberley. Amberley is 57 km north of Christchurch on SH 1.

The only public access into and through Ashley Forest is along Cramptons Bush Road, inland from Amberley. From Amberley turn west and go past the domain onto Douglas Road. This road branches off the main road to Broomfield and becomes Cramptons Bush Road after the Brodies Road intersection.

Cramptons Bush Road leads into Ashley Forest. As this is a commercial forest, the road may be closed at times of extreme fire danger, during high winds or for logging operations. For your own health and safety, please respect this and be aware that heavy vehicles and logging trucks also use this road.

Approximately 2.7 km in from the forest gate is the Lake Janet picnic area. This is not public conservation land and is managed by Rayonier NZ Ltd.

The Grey River picnic area is a further 3.5 km on from Lake Janet. Beyond here gates on this road are locked, as are gates on all other roads leading off Cramptons Bush/Mt Grey roads. These roads are private forestry roads and permission must be gained from Rayonier to use them, including for mountain biking.

Just before the picnic area is a concrete ford over the Grey River. The ford may become impassable after heavy rain.

Phone Rayonier NZ Ltd (03 310 7612) or DOC (03 313 0820) during office hours for the latest road information. After hours emergency contact: NZ Private Fire Service 0274 480 9279.

Grey River picnic area

DOC manages a picturesque picnic area in Mt Grey/ Maukatere Conservation Area close to the Grey River. Camping is permitted but fires are prohibited at all times. This is a basic (free) campsite with a toilet. Water is available from the Grey River. Insect repellent is recommended due to the high numbers of sandflies.

Walking tracks

Grey River Nature Walk

Time: 1 hour loop track, 1.7 km



This well-benched loop walk is particularly suitable for family groups, but young children should be supervised as there are steep drop-offs in places. A fine example of the diverse native forest once found on the Canterbury Plains, the walk passes through mixed tawhai/podocarp forest, including black beech, rimu, kaikahikatea, and mataī.

The walk starts at the Grey River Picnic Area. For the first 400 m the track climbs up to a look-out over the Grey River. About 20 m further on, Red Beech Track branches off. From here on Grey River Nature Walk is relatively flat as it leads back to the road. After crossing the road the track loops back to come out at the road again by the picnic area.

Tramping tracks

Mt Grey/Maukatere Track

Time: 2–3 hours one way (uphill)



This track starts on the other side of the Grey River from the picnic area. The track climbs steadily through native bush and small areas of pine forest before opening out on to tussock slopes leading to the trig on the summit of Mt Grey/Maukatere (934 m). Some of the best views in Canterbury can be enjoyed from the summit.

Red Beech Track

Time: 3–4 hours one way (downhill)

From the summit of Mt Grey it is possible to descend via Red Beech Track to the Grey River picnic area. This track is steep in places, over patches of scree, and is easier to descend than climb. About half way down you will need to ford the Grey River. Check the river levels at the picnic site before starting your trip. If water is flowing over the ford, it will be too dangerous to cross the river on Red Beech Track.

Other activities

Hunting

Hunting is permitted only on public conservation land and there is no public access for hunting in the private forestry land. To hunt on these lands you need to join a club registered with Rayonier who then allocate certain blocks to these groups. This is a major safety issue as these hunters are not aware of other people in the forestry blocks.

You will require a permit to hunt on any public conservation land. Hunting permits are available from all Canterbury Conservancy DOC Area Offices. You must have a firearms licence to be issued with a permit. A PDF map and information factsheet covering the Mt Grey/Maukatere hunting block is available on the DOC website (enter "mt grey hunting" in the search box), or from any DOC office.

Dogs

Dogs are permitted in the Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area at the picnic area and on tracks but must be on a leash at all times. Hunting dogs are permitted only when the owner is issued with a valid permit, obtainable at the same time as a hunting permit.



Matariki Forests

Mt Grey/Maukatere Conservation Area is surrounded by commercial forest plantations owned by Matariki Forests and managed by Rayonier NZ Ltd.



This is not a recreation area but a high-risk industrial site, and consequently there are comprehensive health and safety policies for all access and operations in Ashley Forest.

No unauthorised vehicle access is allowed as the winding and narrow roads are used by logging and roading trucks, making them dangerous for unfamiliar users. Hunting access is allowed only on weekends to permitted hunting clubs. Weekend access for mountain bikers can be gained as a member of the North Canterbury Cycling Club.

A weekend schedule of activities is provided to all registered users. The schedule includes any road closures due to logging operations and risks such as poisoning, trapping, spraying and weed control.



Puketeraki Forest



Puketeraki Forest, an area of 6,750 hectares of beech forest, snow tussocklands and alpine scrub, is located north of Oxford Forest on the Puketeraki Range. There are tramping tracks and two huts in this area. It is a comparatively remote subalpine/alpine area in the headwaters of the Ashley River and is mainly used by hunters and more experienced trampers, rather than for family day-walks.

Getting there

The only access is from Lees Valley Road, about 10 km in from the start of the valley (from Ashley Gorge). A sign indicates the vehicle track on the left of Lees Valley Road. This marked track is generally negotiable with two or four wheel drive vehicles, and travels for about 3.5 km across the valley to a locked gate and car park. Keep to the

marked track as this is private farmland. There is foot access only from the locked gate. The access continues to follow a 4WD track through pasture on the true right of the Ashley River for a further 4 km and then becomes a marked track.

Note: You are crossing private farmland from the Lees Valley Road to the car park and then on the walking track as far as the Lillburn Route junction. This access is a privilege, not a right, respect this and keep strictly to the marked tracks. Dogs are not allowed in this area.

Tramping tracks

Youngman Stream Hut

Time: 4–5 hours one way



From the locked gate at the car park access to Youngman Stream Hut is via a marked track along the true right of the Ashley River. For about an hour follow a 4WD track through pastureland, crossing the Lillburn River until the cattle yards and marked route to Tent Gully. Approximately 1 km after Tent Gully, the track leaves the beech forest becoming a marked route, sidling high through tussock, scrub and patches of beech before re-entering the forest and descending to ford the Ashley River about 100 m from Youngman Stream Hut. Alternatively the Ashley River can be followed from Tent Gully to Youngman Stream if the river levels are low.

Youngman Stream Hut (right) is a standard 6-bunk hut with mattresses and heating (one ticket/night).



Youngman Stream to Tarn Hut

Time: 2 hours 30 minutes one way

From the hut, cross the Ashley River and follow the track as it climbs a ridge to the summit of Lillburn Hill. Tarn Hut is a further 20 minutes along the spur south-west of Lillburn Hill. There are spectacular 360-degree views from Lillburn Hill over the foothill forests to Christchurch and the Port Hills beyond. Tarn Hut is sited next to a small picturesque tarn in open alpine grassland. Close to the hut you can find vegetable sheep. These unusual, squat, hardy plants have adapted to survive the harsh alpine environment by forming dense, flat cushions over rocks. Tarn Hut is a basic 4-bunk hut (no charge).

Routes

Lillburn Route

Time: Junction with Youngman Stream Hut Track to Tarn Hut – 2 hours one way.



Lillburn Route provides an alternate access to Lillburn Hill summit and Tarn Hut. The route turn-off is signposted from Youngman Stream Hut Track approximately two hours and 30 minutes from the start of the track at the locked gate, or 10 minutes north of Tent Gully. The unforgiving route climbs very steeply up a ridge to the summit of Lillburn Hill for one hour and 30 minutes. Tarn Hut is a further 20 minutes on from the summit.

Other activities

Hunting

A hunting permit is available from any Canterbury Conservancy DOC office. You must have a firearms licence to be issued with a permit to hunt on public conservation land. A PDF map and information fact sheet covering the Puketeraki hunting block is available



on the DOC website (enter “puketeraki hunting” in the search box), or from any DOC office.

Note: Be mindful of the access routes to this block and where private farmland begins and ends. Hunting is permitted only on public conservation land. As access to the area passes through farmland, dogs are not permitted.

Places to stay

Youngman Stream Hut – standard 6-bunk hut (1 hut ticket/night)

Tarn Hut – basic 4-bunk hut (no charge)