

Welcome to the gorgeous Manawatu Gorge

An iconic nature destination in the Lower North Island

It is hard to imagine that such a beautiful and accessible piece of forest is less than 20 minutes drive from Palmerston North city. If you haven't walked these tracks before, then it is a "must do", particularly for those who live in the Manawatu.

Known by tangata whenua as 'Te Apiti' (meaning the narrow cleft or gorge), the Manawatu Gorge is unusual because it is one of the few places in New Zealand where the river crosses a mountain range. The Manawatu River was created long before the mountain ranges were born. As the land rose, the river continued to cut its way through the mountains creating the gorge. To the north is the Ruahine Range and to the south lie the Tararua ranges.

Things to see

The forest is quite unusual, with its abundance of giant maidenhair fern. Manawatu is the only place it is found 'wild' in New Zealand. Nikau palms are here in abundance giving a tropical touch to the track. On a fine day, the various viewpoints along the track are impressive, and the latest additions to the landscape, the wind turbines, are an interesting feature as well.

Location

The Manawatu Gorge is approximately 12 km east of Palmerston North adjacent to State Highway 3. At the western (Ashhurst) end, access the Tawa Loop Walk and the Manawatu Gorge Track from the carpark on the left side of the road immediately before the gorge entrance. At the eastern (Woodville) end, the track entrance is on Ballance Gorge Road just across the Ballance Bridge. The Upper Gorge Bridge and Manawatu Gorge Loop tracks begin here.

Te Apiti Manawatu Gorge Project

Partners and the community are working together to preserve, sustain and enhance the biodiversity, recreational cultural and educational values of this unique site.

On the ground, the focus is on controlling pest animals and plants, replanting native vegetation and upgrading recreational facilities.

For further information, see www.teapiti.com



Whatonga. Photo: Department of Conservation



NEW ZEALAND
environmental
CARE CODE

- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit

Toitu te whenua
(Leave the land undisturbed)

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Private Bag 11010
Palmerston North 4442
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newzealand.govt.nz

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

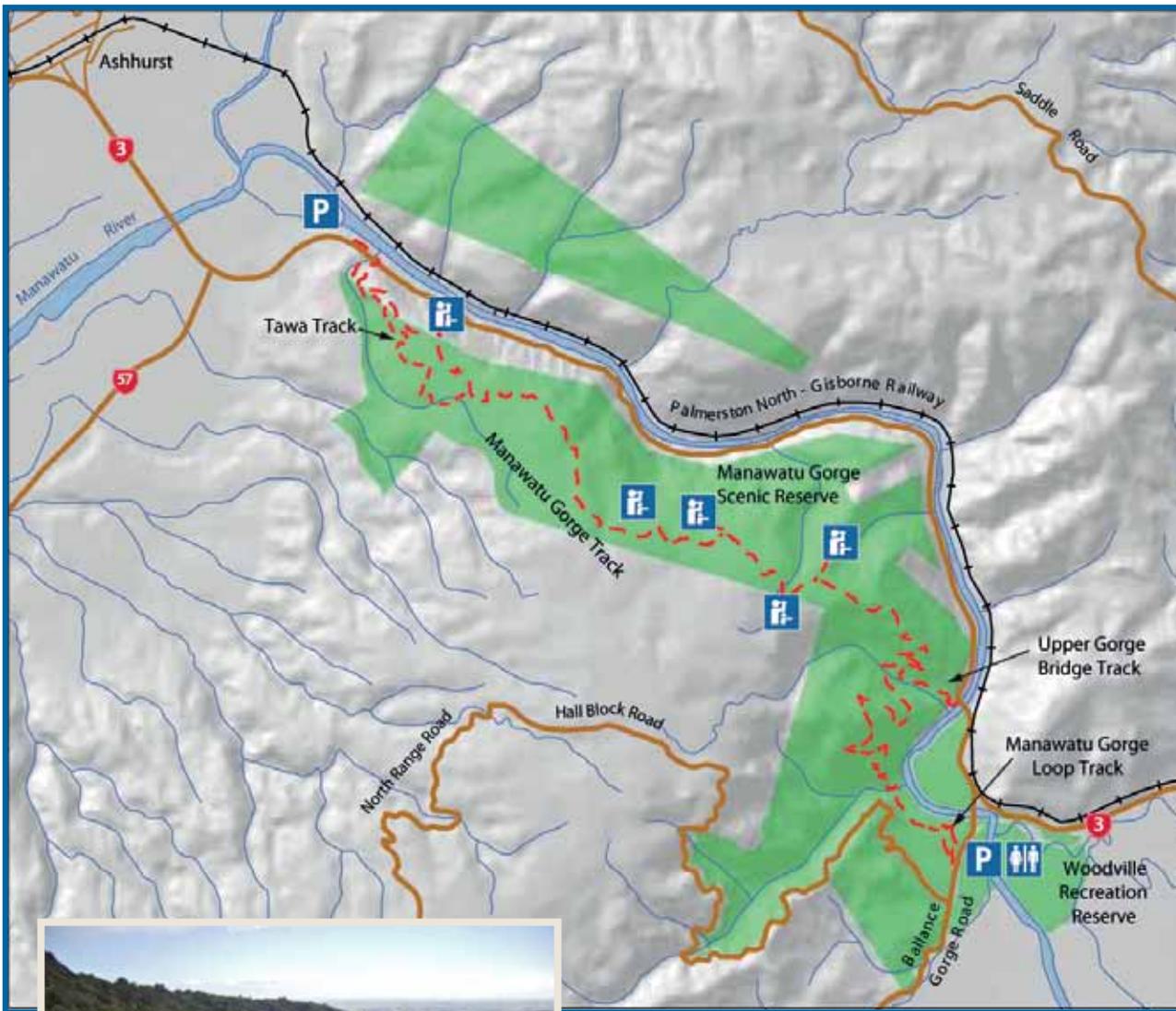
Report any safety hazards
or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

Manawatu Gorge Tracks

Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve

Walker on Manawatu Gorge Track. Photo by Ailsair Thom.





Viewing platform.
Photo: DOC.

Tawa Loop Walk

Walking Track, 1 – 2 hours

Starting from the Ashhurst end, the track gives an alternative shorter walk to that of the Manawatu Gorge Track. This 4 km walk includes 'Tom's Lookout' offering views over Palmerston North and Ashhurst, and joins up with the main track under the watchful eye of Whatonga.

Manawatu Gorge Track

Walking Track, 3.5 – 5.5 hours one way.

This 11 km walk is very achievable for people of average fitness. The well-formed metal track follows a steady gradient. Walking shoes or boots are recommended.

Please note the start and end points of this track are different. The western track entrance is on the closed State Highway 3 at the Ashhurst end. The eastern track entrance is on Ballance Gorge Road at the Woodville end. You will need to make transport arrangements if you plan to traverse the gorge on the full 11 km track.

Upper Gorge Bridge Track

Walking Track, 2 – 3.5 hours one way

This track gives an alternative exit from the Manawatu Gorge Track, providing a shorter walk. This track finishes back down on State Highway 3 near the gorge bridge. Please note the start and end points of this track are different, and there is no footpath back to the eastern carpark.

Manawatu Gorge Loop Track

Loop Track, 15 – 30 minutes

If your time is limited, or you have family members who can't manage a long walk, there is a short loop track located at the Woodville end of the Manawatu Gorge. It is an easy meander through beautiful native bush.

The loop track has no steps and is suitable for pushchairs. A playground and toilet in Woodville Recreation Reserve across the road from the car park make it an ideal destination for young families.