



TE HANGĀRURU TRAIL GUIDE

TE HANGĀRURU - A PLACE OF ABUNDANCE

Where the skies once darkened with native birds, today the spirit of abundance lives on.

The Last Spike – 1908

At this place, New Zealand's North Island Main Trunk Line was finally joined, connecting Auckland and Wellington by rail.

Ride Tip

Take your time — this flowing trail invites you to pause, look, and listen to the forest returning to life.

Corridor of Connection

From mountain streams to the mighty Whanganui River, Te Hangāruru follows ancient pathways linking people, places, and stories.

Respect the Rohe

Travel with respect across the ancestral lands of Te Korowai o Wainuiārua. Your journey follows in the footsteps of great chiefs and guardians of this land.

Travel slowly. Listen closely.
And reconnect to the abundance of Te Hangāruru.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cross stunning boardwalks and three suspension bridges

Marvel at magnificent views of Mt Ruapehu

Explore relics of Horopito's timber and railway history

Visit the iconic Last Spike monument

Ride through regenerating wetlands and native bush

Travel through lands cared for by Te Korowai o Wainuiārua iwi



Mountains to Sea
Ngā Ara Tūhono

TE HANGĀRURU
9.5KM



TE HANGĀRURU – A PLACE OF ABUNDANCE

OUR STORY

Te Hangāruru is a journey across ancient forests, historic railway pathways, and flourishing wetlands.

Gifted by Uenuku, the name Hangāruru speaks of a time when native birds filled the sky above the great Waimarino forests, darkening the heavens with their abundance.

This was a place where mana whenua gathered, hunted, and journeyed between Manganui o te Ao and Tokaanu — a place rich in life and connection.

Today, Te Hangāruru celebrates this spirit of abundance. The trail offers a reconnection to a landscape shaped by resilience, guardianship, and renewal, honouring the footsteps of tūpuna (ancestors) who moved across this whenua.

TRAIL ROUTE

Starting from Horopito — a once-thriving timber town nestled at the southern edge of the Waimarino forests — Te Hangāruru flows northward through regenerating native bush, historic tramways, and wetland boardwalks.

You'll cross three suspension bridges, ride beneath a historic railway underpass, and sidle alongside the sparkling Mangaturuturu Stream, pausing to admire waterfalls and look for whio (blue duck).

The trail leads you toward the site of The Last Spike — where in 1908, New Zealand's North Island Main Trunk Line was finally joined, connecting Auckland to Wellington by rail.



(Please note: at this time, the trail is an out-and-back ride to The Last Spike while future extensions toward Waimarino are completed.)

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Te Hangāruru lies within the rohe of Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, the people of Uenuku, Tamahaki, and Tamakana. The trail crosses the Waimarino Block — once a vast, life-giving forest at the heart of iwi identity.

Despite the land's loss during colonial settlement, the mauri (life force) endures. Riding or walking here means tracing the pathways of generations who nurtured, traversed, and cared for this land. Travel gently, tread respectfully — every step is a connection to living history.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Once cleared for logging, the forests around Te Hangāruru are regenerating. Native trees, birds, and waterways are being restored through collaborative conservation led by iwi, community groups, and environmental guardians. Watch for tūī, kererū, tiwaiwaka (fantail), and the return of whio in the clean alpine streams.

MARKET GARDEN HERITAGE

Beyond the forest edges, you'll pass through one of New Zealand's richest vegetable-growing regions. The volcanic soils of Waimarino have produced world-famous carrots, parsnips, potatoes, and brussels sprouts since the early 1900s — a tradition proudly celebrated in Ohakune, the Carrot Capital of New Zealand.

CORRIDORS OF CONNECTION

Te Hangāruru follows an ancient and modern pathway:

- The Manganui o te Ao River once carried people and taonga between mountain and awa.
- The North Island Main Trunk Railway connected north and south through Horopito, symbolising a nation united.
- State Highway 4 later wove its way alongside the iron rails, linking communities across the Ruapehu District.

Today, your journey along the trail echoes these same connections — by wheel, foot, and spirit.

“From iron rails to winding trails — your journey follows a landscape shaped by connection.”



This trail is developed and maintained by the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono Charitable Trust. Feedback and support mountainstosea.nz/support

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OUR SHORT SURVEY.



SHARE YOUR PHOTOS & STORIES:
HELP SPREAD THE WORD



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TE HANGĀRURU



Mountains to Sea
Ngā Ara Tūhono



GRADE 2

Easy – flowing trail suitable for most riders and walkers.

Trail Surface:
Firm gravel, boardwalks, compacted trail.

More details:
mountainstosea.nz/trail-grades/

LENGTH
9.1km (one way)
18km (return)

DURATION
2-3 hrs
(return)

START
Horopito Hub

FACILITIES

Parking and shuttle services available (visit mountainstosea.nz/organise)

Plan extra time to enjoy photo stops, storytelling signs, and quiet moments with the ngahere.

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[@M2SNZ](http://mountainstosea.nz)



Discover your Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono journey
*Mountain locations are for visual reference only.

Please note: To access Uenuku Pines Mountain Bike Park, you must purchase a day license from Ruapehu MTB Club first. (ruapehumbike.co.nz).

Phase II
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A REALITY! HEAD TO
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