



Mountains
to Sea
Ngā Ara Tūhono

KAIWHAKAUKA
TRACK
17KM



HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Originally a six-foot horse and cart track, then a tramping track, the Kaiwhakauka Track is a rewarding adventure ride amongst our connected pathways of the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono.

The twin valleys – Kaiwhakauka and Mangapurua – share fascinating and ultimately sorrowful WWI settler history, with the iconic Bridge to Nowhere a fittingly forlorn finale to the story.

A significant feature of this valley and connecting Mangapurua is the papa geology. Towering bluffs constantly shed their edges, the bluey grey surface of Depot Road reminds us of its origin in the wet (it's soft and slippery), and the unique papa drives are testament to humans trying to tame this wild place.

ROUTE NOTES

Part of this trail is a converted tramping track and there is a small section (approximately 4 kms) that is single track with some drop offs. If you are not confident – we recommend taking your time and walking these sections – enjoying the bush. (This section has been widened and improved, but it will always be a remote adventure).

Note: the distance (42 km) and time provided are for the combined Kaiwhakauka and Mangapurua Tracks: from Whakahoro to the Pou junction (17 km), then through the Mangapurua Valley to Mangapurua Landing jet boat pick-up.

The jet boat pick-up must be booked in advance. (See Mangapurua notes). The trail is best suited for mountain bikes with knobby tread and riders with good fitness and single-track riding experience.

An alternative option takes in the Kaiwhakauka and returning down the Ruatiti valley with its spectacular views of snow-clad mountains to the east (29kms total).

HIGHLIGHTS

Blue Duck Station with native Whio, Kiwi and other natives.

Stunning podocarp forest and secret waterfalls.

Link to Mangapurua Track.

Remote, rural valley packed with history.

View-filled climb.

Traditional farm heritage mixed with forward focused conservation and hospitality.



SUITED TO
MOUNTAIN BIKES



NO CELL
COVERAGE



BOOK
JET BOAT

TRAIL ROUTE

Kaiwhakauka is a true back country trail, best suited to fit, experienced, and well-equipped mountain bikers with no fear of sweat and mud. Much of it is narrow, technical single-track that can get seriously muddy after rain.

It is, however, exceptionally beautiful, boasting hidden creeks, lush bush, and pretty farmland, and rustic relics of a bygone era. The fact that few people venture here adds a feeling of intrepid adventure.

The trail starts at Blue Duck Station at Whakahoro, on the banks of the Whanganui River, 45 km west of SH4 near Owhango. The station is a working farm, so named for the resident whio (blue ducks); the team are serious about preserving the bird populations and put considerable work into conservation. They also offer authentic, homespun hospitality in both food and lodging. It is a great spot to recharge before heading out on the Kaiwhakauka.

Follow the (sometimes muddy) gravel road up towards the Whanganui National Park entrance. Along the way take a few minutes to climb down the short walking track to admire the waterfall that cascades into a canyon that is also home to glow worms, whio and more.

Just before heading into the bush is the “Depot.” A historical stone floored building filled with remnants of the past. The Depot was used to store deliveries from the riverboats for the settlers of the area. Back towards the trail entrance is

Wades Landing which was the key site for transfer of goods and people into this area and onwards to the Ruapehu settlements off the river.

Through the gate, the track leads up the valley through a mixture of regenerating bush and farmland to the Whanganui National Park boundary (Please take care through this section as it has some drop offs and is primarily single track – walk if you need to. The National Park section is approx. 4km).

Not far into the park is a re discovered Papa drive, one of a few in the area built to tame streams and contribute to the road.

Keep your eyes peeled for the wooden nameplates indicating the “settlement” plots of the post WWI soldiers. Long since abandoned, you can only wonder at how touch it was to settle this area. The regenerating podocarp forest is home to rewarewa, kamahi and hinau with rimu and tawa towering above. The farm to the east is today being actively “farmed” for Manuka honey.

Near the park boundary you come to the old Mosley homestead site near the Waione Stream. The open clearing with a shelter lends itself well to camping.

The track continues towards Cootes’ homestead (private land), crossing many small, bridged side streams with a few small open flats. The old Tobin homestead, which is marked by an old chimney stack, can be seen to the right of the track.

From here it’s a steady climb up a farm road (mostly clay) to the junction. As it climbs, it passes through relatively undisturbed mixed tawa/podocarp forest for about 3.2 km.

The track junction is marked by a carved tōtara pou on the old Kaiwhakauka and Mangapurua roads. The pou symbolises the ngahere (forest) and provides spiritual and cultural safety for visitors. The pou also pays tribute to the settlers of the Mangapurua and Kaiwhakauka Valleys.

It is short distance from here to the Mangapurua trig and settlers war memorial.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE TRAIL AND SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE VIA OUR SHORT SURVEY.



SHARE YOUR PHOTOS & STORIES: HELP SPREAD THE WORD

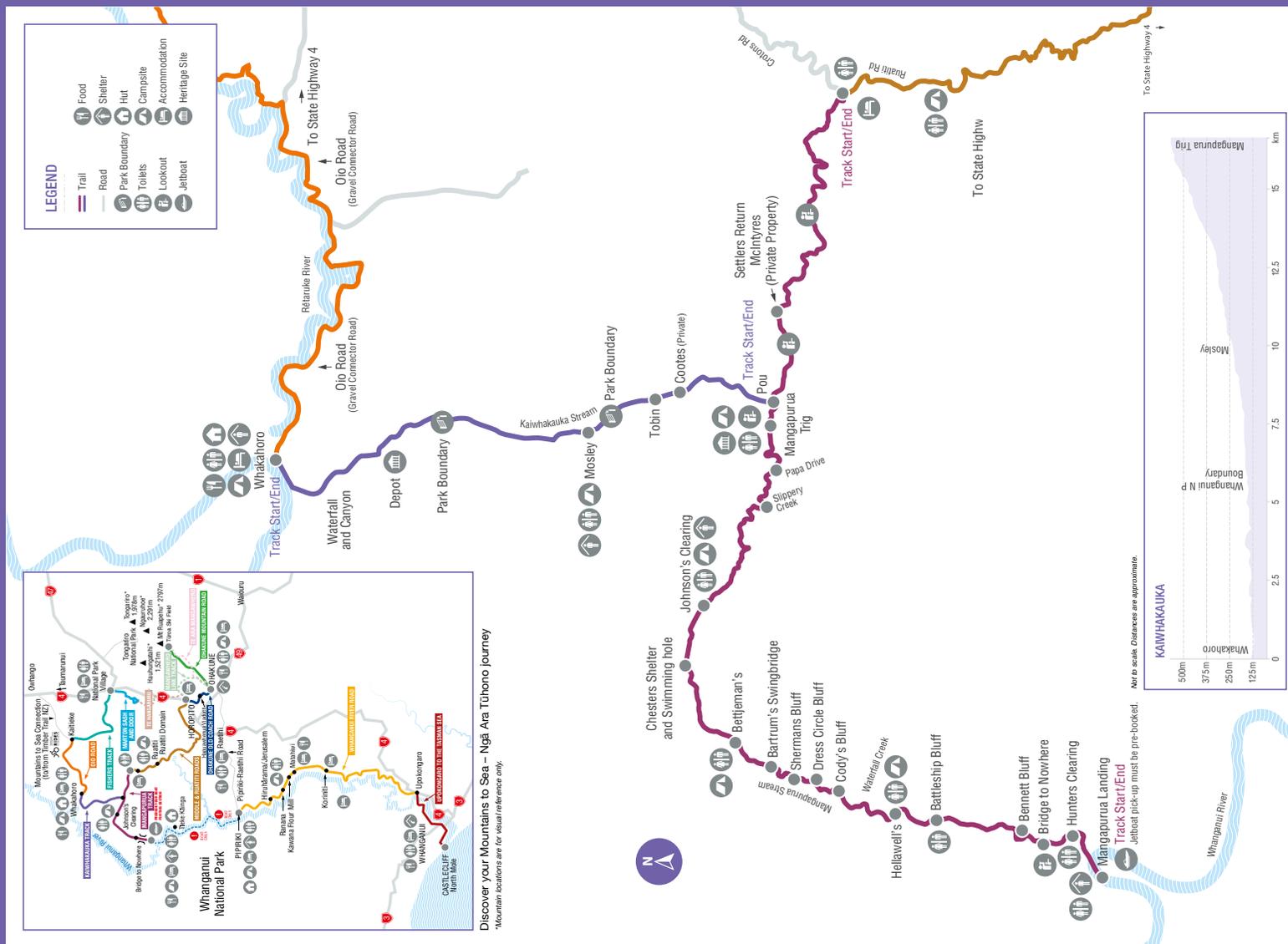


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RUAPEHU
OUR GREATER OUTDOORS

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

KAIWHAKAUKA TRACK



KAIWHAKAUKA

GRADE
4 (advanced)

LENGTH
17 km
(or 41km to Mangapurua landing)

TOTAL ASCENT
400m

DURATION
5-7 hrs
Including Mangapurua

LOCATION
Retaruke – Whanganui

RIDE
All year – best in dry conditions.

DIRECTION
Generally ridden from Whakahoro (Blue Duck Station towards the Pou on the Mangapurua).

MANGAPURUA

GRADE
3* (intermediate)

**In or after significant rain may ride as a Grade 4 with slippery papa surface.*

LENGTH
36 km

TOTAL DESCENT
590m

DURATION
4-7 hrs
(depending on conditions)

LOCATION
Whanganui National Park

RIDE
Closed in Winter – check mountainstosea.nz/trackstatus

DIRECTION
Generally ridden from Ruatiti Valley or connected via the Kaiwhakauka towards Mangapurua Landing.

Note: Jet Boat must be pre-booked to exit.



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