

Further information

Track information is correct at date of printing but facilities and services can change. Check with the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

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Kauaeranga valley and Broken Hills



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 Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

Kauaeranga valley walking and tramping tracks

Serviced hut

Backcountry campsite

Scenic campsite

Accommodation

Visitor centre

Powered site

Mountain biking

Abseiling

Kauri dieback hygiene station

Short walk

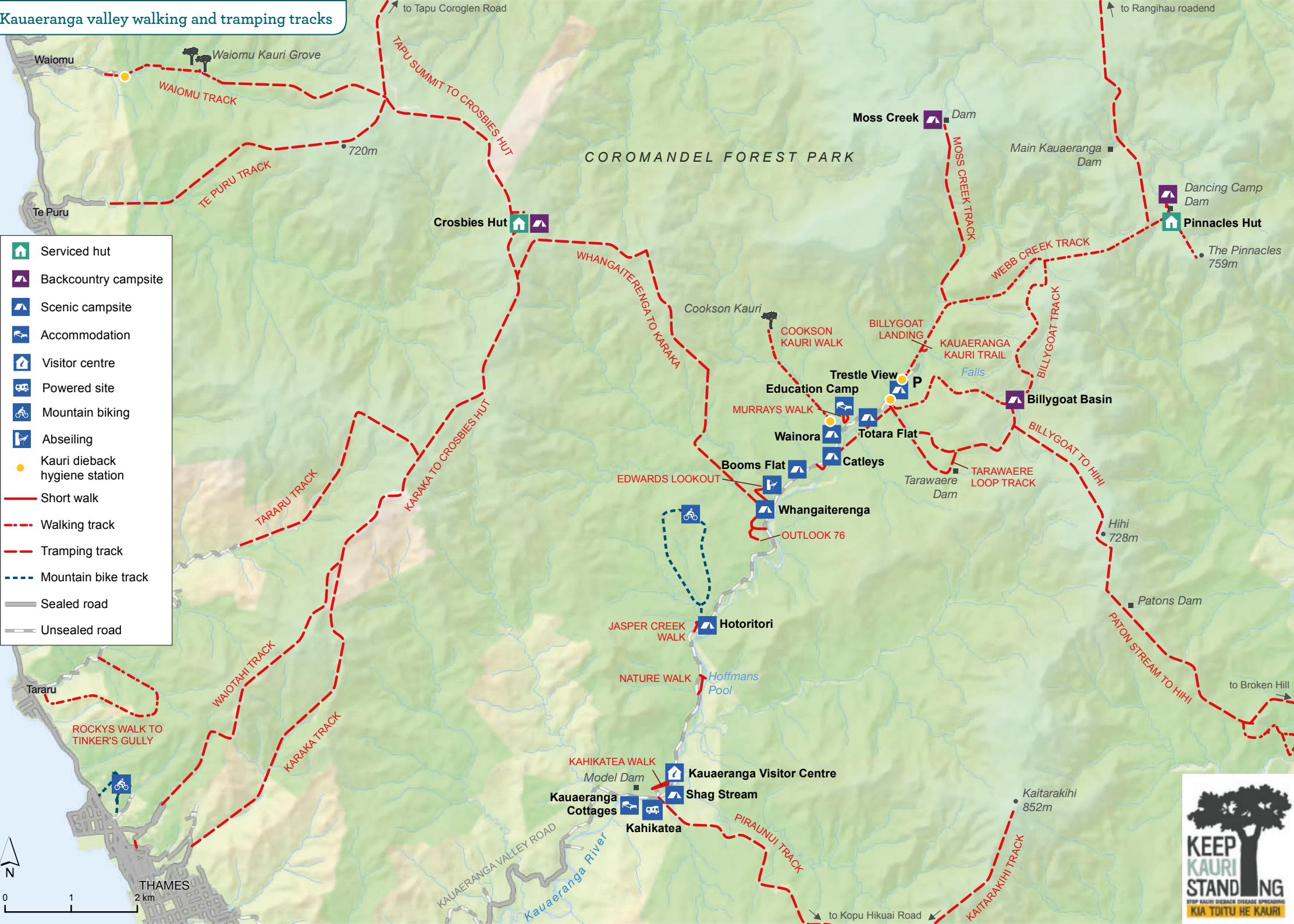
Walking track

Tramping track

Mountain bike track

Sealed road

Unsealed road



Introduction

Welcome to the Kauaeranga valley – an ideal place for a family day out, a camping holiday or exploring the numerous walking and tramping opportunities.

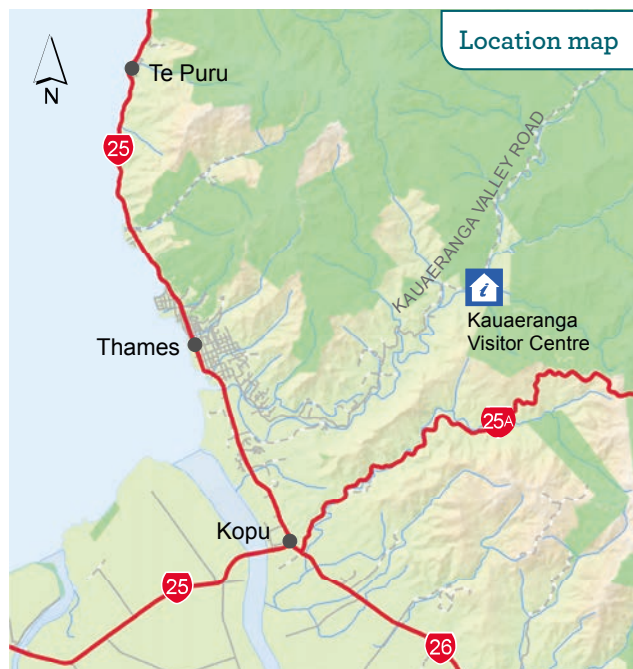
Getting there

From State Highway 25 at the southern entrance to Thames, turn right into Banks Street beside the service station. Banks Street veers right into Parawai Road, which then becomes Kauaeranga Valley Road. The road changes from sealed to gravel after the Visitor Centre.

Kauaeranga Visitor Centre, 13 km up the Kauaeranga valley, is the main point of contact for track, hut and camping information, with 24-hr information panels under the covered veranda. The Visitor Centre is open daily (except Christmas Day) with extended hours over the summer school holidays. Hut tickets, hut bookings, maps, books and other conservation-related material are available, as well as displays visual of the area's kauri logging days.

The road continues for a further 9 km to where the Pinnacles Hut track begins.

Public conservation land and tracks within the valley are managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC).



Natural features

It is 9 km from the Visitor Centre to the end of the road, following alongside the Kauaeranga River. There are fords across streams along the way that can be impassable after heavy rain. The bush-clad hills, rock outcrops, pinnacles, bluffs and gorges – a dramatic reminder of the area's volcanic origin.

The Kauaeranga valley, once filled with magnificent kauri trees, was extensively logged from the 1870s to the 1920s. Today only a few giant kauri remain – the Cookson kauri featured on the front cover is one – although young kauri saplings are spread throughout the forest. Tall trees such as rātā, rimu and tawa now emerge above the canopy of native vegetation, home to forest birds such as tūī, bellbird, tomtit, grey warbler, shining cuckoo, kererū and morepork. North Island brown kiwi and kākā are occasionally present.

Kauaeranga kauri

During the heyday of kauri logging, bushmen, using axes, saws and timber jacks, felled thousands of kauri in the valley. The logs were trimmed, cut to length and transported to streams and rivers via log chutes, skidded roads and bush tramways. They were stockpiled until they could be moved via driving dams. During the 1920s alone, more than 40 dams were built in the valley using kauri timber that was pit-sawn on site. Dams were often tripped in sequence, sending logs down the river in huge quantities. (For further information on kauri dams see page 24).

Tramlines, such as the Billygoat tramline, were used extensively in the 1920s for hauling timber by horse or steam locomotive. The kauri logs were eventually towed by steam tug across the Firth of Thames to sawmills on the Auckland waterfront.

A lot of kauri was exported but it was also used for furniture, railway carriages, houses and boats.



Kauri dieback

Kauri trees are under threat from kauri dieback, a soil-borne disease. It is spread through soil movement so stay on the tracks and always clean your footwear, bikes and camping equipment before and after use.

Enjoying the outdoors safely

Tracks are developed to different standards: walking tracks change to tramping tracks, so watch for signs indicating this. Orange triangles are used to mark tracks where required. Other coloured markers or tape are for pest control purposes and should not be followed.

Choose the right type of track for your group's experience level. Be well prepared for all types of weather and conditions. Have a first aid kit, survival kit, and adequate food and clothing, and know what to do if things go wrong. Safety is your responsibility. See www.adventuresmart.nz for further information.

Please be aware that rivers and streams can rise rapidly during heavy rain. Take care before attempting crossings and learn safe crossing methods.

Track classifications



Short walk

Easy walking for up to an hour. The track is well formed, with an even surface. There may be 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. Mostly well-formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities. Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged. Walking shoes or 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 and moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills. Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect river crossings. Tramping/hiking boots required.

Note: Times given are based on an average family group. They are a guide only and may vary depending on weather, track conditions and fitness levels.



Kauaeranga short walks

Kahikatea walk to model dam (20 min, 900 m return)

This walk starts opposite the main entrance to the Visitor Centre, passing through native plantings to the one-third replica kauri driving dam. The path crosses the dam as far as an old water race. You will need to retrace your steps to the Visitor Centre car park. There is a New Zealand-based 'Treasure Hunt' on this track. An information sheet is available from the Visitor Centre.

Nature walk to Hoffmans Pool (30 min, 500 m return)

Information panels along this easy walk introduce you to the valley's native trees and shrubs. Look for the old water supply intake that once fed Thames township and associated stamper batteries. Hoffmans Pool is a great place for a picnic and a summer swim.

Jasper Creek (20 min, 500 m return)

This walk starts at Hotoritori Campsite and passes through regenerating tōtara, rimu, tōwai, and kahikatea, with several varieties of fungi and ground orchids growing alongside. The walk finishes back at the campsite.

Outlook 76 (1 hr, 1.2 km return)

Access to this walk is between Hotoritori and Whangaiterenga campsites. It involves a climb up to a lookout with excellent views of the valley and Table Mountain. You can return to the road the way you came or descend to Whangaiterenga campsite, with a 4-minute walk back along the road to your starting point.

Edwards Lookout (1 hr, 1.4 km return)

Cross the concrete ford beyond Whangaiterenga Campsite and walk through mānuka-tōwai forest to a rock outcrop and saddle with extensive views of the valley and campgrounds. This is a favourite spot for abseiling.

Billygoat Landing Track (20 min/1 km return)

From the road end car park, follow the Kauri Trail for about 10 min before turning onto Billygoat Landing Track just after the swing bridge.

There are good views of the Billygoat Falls (180 m high) and the Billygoat incline, built in 1921. A steam hauler was used to lower logs on trucks down the incline to Billygoat Landing. The logs were then hauled across the main river and loaded onto the Kauaeranga Tramline.

Murrays walk (30 min, 1 km return)

A raised boardwalk takes you through a variety of vegetation from mānuka, fivefinger, karamū and koromiko growing at the forest edge, into rewarewa, māhoe, tōwai, tawa, rimu and rātā and past a swampy area with kahikatea and other wetland plants. Nikau and at least three species of tree ferns – ponga, mamaku and whekī – can be seen along the way.



Kauaeranga walking tracks

Catleys Track (45 min, 1.4 km one way)

Cross the Kauaeranga River at the Tarawaere entrance (there is currently no bridge) and walk along river flats and through regenerating native forest. The walking track finishes on the opposite side of the river from Catleys Campsite. You will need to ford the river. Carefully assess the river condition before attempting this. Be prepared to wait or turn back.

Cookson Kauri Walk / Wainora Kauri Track (2–3 hr, 5 km return)

Leaving from the Wainora Campsite, walk along and up a well-graded walking track with steps and bridges across the Wainora Stream to the magnificent Cookson kauri (2–3 hr return).

Kauaeranga Kauri Trail



Billygoat Circuit (4–5 hr, 10.5 km)

From the road end car park, cross the river at the swing bridge, continuing alongside it to Webb Creek, then follow the historic packhorse route (steep in places) used by kauri bushmen in the 1920s to travel to logging sites in the upper Kauaeranga valley. After crossing Webb Creek you will climb steps that were cut into rock to make the journey easier for the packhorses. Care is required in places as the rocks can be slippery.

At the top of the climb up Webb Creek, the remains of a skidded road is visible beside the track. Skidded roads were made from small logs laid lengthwise with cross-pieces forming the 'skids'. Logs were pulled along the skids by teams of bullocks or steam haulers.

At the Hydro Camp junction (3.7 km) take the Billygoat walking track where a steady 30-min climb leads to a saddle with excellent views down the Kauaeranga valley to the Hauraki Plains. A little further on, a knoll overlooks the Billygoat Basin (caution: sections of the track may be slippery from this point). The first attempt to log this basin was made in the 1880s but was abandoned within a few years as driving logs down the Billygoat Falls proved too destructive. The basin was successfully logged in the 1920s after the construction of the Billygoat incline to bypass the falls, and the use of a steam hauler.

Drop down into Billygoat Basin and cross Billygoat Stream before passing through a clearing with basic camping facilities. A few minutes further on, a 50-m side track overlooks the site of the collapsed long trestle bridge, once

part of the bush tramline. The trestle was 160 m long and 11 m above the ground at the highest point.



Back on the main Billygoat walking track, pass the junction for the Tarawaere and Hihi tramping tracks and follow the tramline through deep cuttings past two short trestles. Near the hauler site at the top of the incline there are good views of Billygoat Falls (180 m). From here, it is another half hour to the Billygoat Track car park, with a 300-m walk back along the road to the road end car park.

WARNING

At the time this brochure went to print, there was no swing bridge at the end of this track, where the Billygoat track and Tarawaere track meet the Kauaeranga River. A river crossing is required. Please check with the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre for an update.



Pinnacles Hut (2 hr 30 min – 3 hr one way)

From the Pinnacles Track car park, walk to the swingbridge across the Kauaeranga River, continue alongside the river to Webb Creek, then follow the historic packhorse route to the Hydro Camp (1 hr 30 min – 2 hr). This section is covered in more detail in the 'Kauaeranga Kauri Trail' description.

The track from the Hydro Camp climbs and sidles around a hill before following a more open ridge. Enjoy impressive views down a branch of the Tairua River and the rugged volcanic landforms of Tauranikau and the Pinnacles.

The hut (bookings required) is a short walk down a signposted side track. Total distance 6 km. Look for the remains of the Dancing Camp Dam 5 min down a track from the hut. This stringer flume dam, built in 1921, was the second largest dam in the valley and was partly restored in 1994 (see photo on page 24). This is the only complete kauri dam remaining in New Zealand.



Pinnacles Hut – Pinnacles (40 min one way)

A steady climb, steep in places, follows a well-constructed, stepped path, 1 km in length, to the summit of the Pinnacles (759 m). Here there are spectacular views of the bush, mountains and coastline of the eastern Coromandel Peninsula. Please take care at the summit.

Note: this is a tramping track.



Kauaeranga tramping tracks

Piraunui Track (2 hr one way)

This tramping track starts near the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre on the opposite side of the Kauaeranga River from the Shag Stream Campsite. (*Note: Kauaeranga River is unbridged. Carefully assess before wading across.*) Follow the markers across private farmland to the Forest Park boundary. Once in the forest, climb up the western side of the valley to the Kopu-Hikuai Road. The Piraunui Valley contains forested river flats, stands of regenerating kauri and unusual rock formations.

Tarawaere Dam Loop Track (3 hr return)

Just past the Totara Flat Campsite, cross the Kauaeranga River and follow Tarawaere Stream, crossing it many times, to the remains of a rafter flume dam. A one-third scale working replica of this dam is a 10-min walk from the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre. A track above the dam connects with the Billygoat walking track.

Tarawaere Dam – Billygoat circuit (4 hr)

Continuing on from the Tarawaere Dam, the track follows an old packhorse trail and climbs to a ridge at 500 m. This track is steep in places and can be slippery in wet conditions. It joins the Billygoat walking track near the remains of the long trestle (see number 10). Follow the trail back past the short trestles to the Kauaeranga River to complete a circuit.

This is rugged country – keep to the tracks.



Trampers in the valley. Image: J. Fulford

Kauaeranga road end – Moss Creek (3 hr one way)

From the car park, go past the Webb Creek junction following the river where groves of nikau are an attractive sight, cross the river via the suspension bridge and then climb steeply to the Moss Creek Campsite.

Note: there is no access to Table Mountain or Mt Rowe.

Pinnacles Hut to Rangihau Road End (6–8 hr, 10.8 km)

The track descends steeply for about one hour and crosses the Kauaeranga River (no bridge). It drops steadily through scrubland towards the road.

Note: unless you have made arrangements to be picked up by vehicle, it is another 3–4 hour walk along a rough road to Coroglen.

Whangaiterenga – Crosbies Hut (4–6 hr)

Leave from the back of the Whangaiterenga Campsite, crossing the stream twice before climbing a ridge. The track then drops back down to the stream, which you cross again. A steep uphill section takes you to Orange Peel Corner and on to Crosbies Hut. There are three unbridged stream crossings, so take care after rain.

Crosbies Hut to Thames coast (4–6 hr)

From Crosbies Hut, the track goes north or south with a number of exit points – Waiotahi, Tararu or Karaka tracks in Thames to the south, and Te Puru, Waiomu or the Tapu-Coroglen Road to the north. You will need to arrange transport for your exit point. See the Coromandel Recreation brochure for more information about these tracks.

Hihi to Broken Hills

More extensive tramping is possible from the Kauaeranga valley through to Broken Hills via the Billygoat, Hihi and Paton Stream Dam (8–10 hr). This should be attempted by experienced trampers only. For more information on these tracks contact the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

Kaitarakihi Tramping Track (3 hr one way)

Kaitarakihi Summit can be reached from the Kopu-Hikuai Road. The track climbs steadily for approximately 2 hr 30 min. You will need to use the installed chains for the final half an hour to reach the summit. It is exposed in windy conditions but offers great views.

Other activities

Mountain biking

An advanced mountain biking track is located behind the Hotoritori Campsite. The facilities are maintained by local club members. Anyone wishing to undertake these activities should talk with Visitor Centre staff for updates on the conditions before setting out.

Abseiling and canyoning

The rock outcrop at Edwards Lookout is a favourite spot for abseiling.

For a canyoning adventure in the Kauaeranga valley, see www.canyon.co.nz

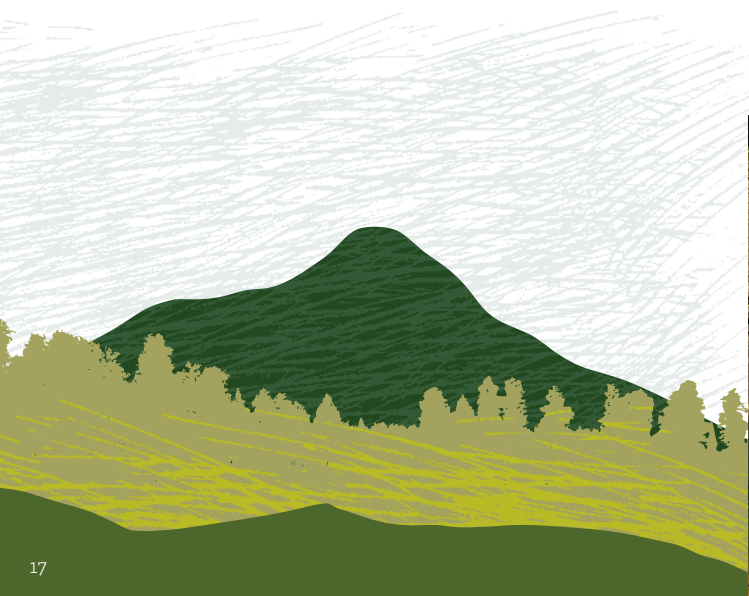
Hunting

Permits are required for hunting goats and pigs on conservation land and can be obtained from the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre and DOC's Hauraki Area Office in Thames (Phone 07 867 9180). You can also obtain permits via www.doc.govt.nz/hunting if you don't intend taking dogs.

Swimming

The Kauaeranga River provides many opportunities for swimming. The best-known swimming hole is at Hoffmans Pool about 1.5 km up the road from the Visitor Centre. The pool close to the Shag Stream Campsite is a good place for families, being shallow on the entry side and deep on the far side.

There are many other swimming spots along the stretch of river from the Visitor Centre to the road end.



Hoffman's Pool. Photo: Dave Fisher

Huts

Two tramping huts are accessible from the Kauaeranga valley.

Pinnacles Hut

Pinnacles Hut is a 2 hr 30 min – 3 hr walk from the Kauaeranga valley road end. It has 80 bunks, mattresses, toilets, a cold shower, solar lighting, gas cookers and gas barbeque. Bring your own cooking utensils. A hut warden is present at all times.

Accommodation at the Pinnacles Hut is frequently booked out Saturday nights or during holiday periods, so forward planning is essential.

Crosbies Hut

Crosbies Hut, situated on the Memorial Loop Track on the main range behind Thames, is a 4–6 hr tramp from any of the access points. The track is not as well formed as the track to the Pinnacles Hut. It has 10 bunks, mattresses and a coal fire. Coal is supplied in the winter months only. Bring your own lighting, cookers and fuel, utensils and cooking equipment.



Book accommodation online at www.doc.govt.nz
Bookings made through Kauaeranga Visitor Centre incur a booking fee.

Note: Backcountry Hut Passes and other DOC hut tickets are not valid for these two huts.

Fees

	Pinnacles Hut	Crosbies Hut
Adult	\$20.00	\$15.00
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	\$10.00	\$7.50
Pre-schooler (0–4 yr)	Free	Free

Camping

Conservation campsites

There are eight campsites in the Kauaeranga valley in attractive bush settings, most close to streams and within easy access to walking tracks.

- **Shag Stream Campsite** is adjacent to the Visitor Centre, beside the Kauaeranga River, and there is a good swimming hole nearby. 30 sites. Open from Labour Weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Hotoritori Campsite** is 3 km north of the Visitor Centre and is across the road from the river. It is one of two campsites where dogs are permitted. 30 sites. Open all year.
- **Whangaiterenga Campsite**, near the junction of Whangaiterenga Stream and Kauaeranga River, is the largest with 50 sites. There are flush toilets at the campsite. Open all year.
- **Booms Flat Campsite** is 6 km north of the Visitor Centre, with 65 sites. Dogs are permitted here. Open from Labour Weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Catleys Campsite** is on the river side of the road, 6.5 km north of the Visitor Centre. 30 sites. Open from Labour Weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Wainora Campsite** is 7 km from the Visitor Centre, is in an attractive bush setting at the start of the Cookson Kauri Walk. 30 sites. Open from Labour Weekend (October) until 30 April.
- **Totara Flat Campsite** is between the road and river, 7.5 km from the Visitor Centre with 30 sites. Open all year.
- **Trestle View** is the last campsite and closest to the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail. 9 km from the Visitor Centre. 20 sites. Open all year.

Fees

Adult	\$8.00 per night
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	\$4.00 per night

Fees can be paid either online or by EFTPOS or credit card at the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre. There is a self-registration, 24-hr payment facility at the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre (cash only).

Powered sites

Kahikatea powered site is located just next to the visitor centre. This site has space for 14 self-contained, electrically certified motorhomes. Four large sites are available for buses. Bookings for this site may be made online or through the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre (07 867 9080). Keys for the power need to be collected from the visitor centre. Keys may be collected after hours by prior arrangement.

Fees

Adult	\$11.00 per night
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	\$5.50 per night

Backcountry campsites (no vehicle access)

There are camping areas near the Pinnacles Hut (Dancing Camp), at Billygoat Basin and Moss Creek in the Kauaeranga valley and also at Crosbies Hut. All sites except Moss Creek must be booked online at www.doc.govt.nz. Bookings through the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre incur a booking fee.

Moss Creek Campsite fees

Adult	1 blue backcountry ticket per night
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	1 yellow backcountry ticket per night

Billygoat Basin Campsite fees

Adult	\$5.00
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	\$2.50

Dancing Camp

Adult	\$10.00
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	\$5.00

Note:

- Sites are allocated on a first-come first-served basis.
- Camping outside designated areas is not permitted.
- There are no fees for preschoolers (0–4 yr).
- Prices subject to change.

Check the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz or contact the Kauaeranga Visitor Centre.

Please remember

Fires

There is a year-round fire ban. You may use gas or spirit burners but not charcoal barbecues.

Dogs

You may bring your dog to the Hotoritori and Booms Flat Campsites in the Kauaeranga valley but they are strictly prohibited at all other campsites. Dogs on a leash are permitted on most walking tracks but not the Kauaeranga Kauri Trail, the Pinnacles Track or at Pinnacles Hut. There are kennels at Crosbies Hut and dogs are permitted there. Keep your dog outside – dogs are not permitted in the hut. No other domestic animals are allowed in the park.

Water

There is no tap water in campsites so you will need to bring water or take it from streams and rivers. It is recommended you boil or purify stream water before drinking. This reduces the risk of infections.

Toilets

All campsites have toilets. Certified self-contained campervans may use their own chemical toilet. For health reasons pit toilets are not allowed.

Recycling and rubbish

Please put rubbish and recycling in the bins provided or, better still, take it home with you.

Mobile phones

There is limited mobile phone coverage past Hotoritori Camp in the valley, and only limited service from Pinnacles and Crosbies huts.

Kauri dams

Kauri dams made it possible for timber to be extracted from otherwise inaccessible parts of the valley.

Dams were constructed on main creeks, their foundations excavated into solid rock to withstand the weight of water and to help make the dam watertight. The structure consisted of a framework of horizontal logs (stringers), upright logs (rafters) and braces (backlegs). All dams used a main stringer and two gate rafters. The framework was faced with kauri planking and caulked to prevent leakage.

In dams where both logs and water were released, a sluice-like flume gate directed logs away from creek banks and the backlegs. The gate was constructed of upright planks, tightly packed together to prevent leakage and wired to the main stringer so they were not lost in the drive (the release of water from the dam). The flume floor was raised above the streambed on large logs called sills, which were set into the bank on either side and covered with planking. In many cases this floor structure is all that remains of the dams today, eg Kauaeranga Main Dam.

Felled kauri lay in creek beds from 3 months to a year, either in or below the dam catchment, awaiting a drive. If there were several dams on one creek their tripping would be synchronised to maintain the momentum of the drive. To create a drive, a tripwire linked to an iron trigger attached to the middle gate plank was pulled upwards, releasing the water in a huge torrent, taking the logs with it. Logs were often damaged in the steep, narrow watercourses.



Dancing Camp Dam, a stringer flume dam near the Pinnacles Hut.

Broken Hills Recreation

COROMANDEL PENINSULA

Introduction

Nestled beside the slow-moving Tairua River, Broken Hills is a tranquil holiday hideaway in a picturesque setting.

Around the turn of the 20th century, a bustling gold-mining settlement named Puketui was established in the Broken Hills Gorge. It had a post office, hall and several shops.

By 1912 a settlement of 200 people had sprung up along the river. Plans were prepared for a permanent township on the site now occupied by the Broken Hills Campsite. Just 2 years later, production at the mines tailed off and the size of the settlement diminished accordingly. Small-scale mining continued in the area until 1923. Relics of this past mining era can still be seen. Today, one of the old drives is being mined using historic methods.

The Broken Hills area was also logged for kauri. Very few patches of unmodified forest remain today. The regenerating forest includes tōwai, mānuka, rewarewa, fivefinger, and tōtara.

Public conservation land within the Broken Hills area is managed by the Department of Conservation with facilities provided for your enjoyment. The beautiful gorge setting provides many opportunities for walking, swimming, canoeing, trout fishing, fossicking, rafting, bird watching, photography, picnicking and camping.



Access

Broken Hills is 19 km from Tairua and 27 km from Whangamata. Turn off State Highway 25 at Hikuai onto Morrison's Road (50 m north of the Pauanui turn off) then onto Puketui Valley Road. It is 6 km to the car park at the end of Puketui Valley Road.

Please note the Tairua River Bridge, a kilometre short of the road end, has a 10-tonne weight limit.

Alternative access is available off the Kopu-Hikuai Road (State Highway 25a), 26 km from Thames. Turn on to Puketui Road 400 m before the Tairua River and Fourth Branch Scenic Reserve. A 4-km gravel road brings you to the Puketui Road car park at the southern end of Broken Hills. You will need to wade the stream to access the track system as there is no bridge across the water.

Please be aware that the two entrance roads (Puketui Road and Puketui Valley Road) to Broken Hills do not connect and a stream crossing is required between them.

Please plan your journey accordingly and access via the road that will take you to the tracks or campsite you wish to use.

Broken Hills Campsite

The Broken Hills Campsite near the end of Puketui Valley Road is located beside the Tairua River amongst native bush. It operates on a first-come, first-served basis and has 45 camping sites. It has toilets, a rubbish collection area and piped water. Water taken directly from the river or streams should be boiled or treated before drinking to reduce the risk of infection.

Fees

Adult	\$15.00 per night
Child/youth (5–17 yr)	\$7.50 per night
Pre-schooler (0–4 years)	Free

A camp manager regularly visits the site during summer to check on camping, clean facilities and collect fees. An honesty box system operates at other times. Please be considerate to other campers and keep noise levels down. Camping outside designated areas is not permitted.

Please remember

- Fires are not permitted in the Broken Hills area, including the campsite. Only gas or spirit burners can be used for cooking. Charcoal burners are not permitted.
- Dogs and all other domestic animals are strictly prohibited at Broken Hills campsite.
- Toilets are located in the campsite. Certified, self-contained campervan owners may use their own chemical toilet. For health reasons, pit toilets are not allowed.
- Mobile phone coverage is limited.

WARNING

Mine tunnels and shafts are very dangerous and may be hidden by vegetation. Keep to marked, official tracks. Do not enter tunnels unless they are clearly marked for public access. Carry a torch with fresh batteries. Warm clothing is recommended.



View of a cliff face from Broken Hills Campsite.
Photo: Robin Bailey



Broken Hills area map



Track guide

Golden Hills Battery Walk (30 min from the Bridge car park, 800 m)

This flat walk starts at the Bridge car park and follows alongside the Tairua River to the Golden Hills Battery site. The track originally carried horse-drawn wagons from the mines to the Golden Hills and Broken Hills Battery sites.

The Golden Hills mine started large scale production in 1908. By 1910 a stamper battery had been built across the river from the mine, but production lasted only 3 years. The battery used an expensive but unreliable coke-powered suction gas engine that was too large for the size of the reef being worked.

On your way to the Golden Hills Battery you will see two mine tunnels (adits) on your left, one of which is still being worked today. Please observe all safety signs. At the battery site look for the original concrete foundations and arches that once supported large cyanide vats.

Broken Hills Battery Walk (20 min, 550 m)

It is an easy flat walk from the northern end of the Bridge car park to the Broken Hills mine, which operated successfully from 1896 to 1914. A water-powered stamper battery began crushing ore in 1899. It produced 51,000 ounces of gold, worth (at 2011 bullion prices) around NZ\$100 million! Sixty people were employed at peak production. The rusting ironmongery seen on the path was once the blacksmith's shop. The track continues past the mine to connect with the walking track to Golden Hills Battery.



Remains of the concrete foundations that supported cyanide vats, Golden Hills Battery.

Gem of the Boom Walk (20 min return from Puketui Valley Road, 400 m loop)

This was the site of an old mining settlement, and relics of the past can still be seen, including what appears to be a jail cut into solid rock. It is an easy loop walk with two bridged crossings over a small creek.

Government Battery (5 min from the Puketui Valley Road car park)

This battery was built by the government to process ore prospected during the 1930s Depression. Only a flat concrete foundation remains visible today. Further up the walking track you'll find a small waterfall and pool — an ideal place to cool down on a hot day.

Puketui Walk (900 m)

This flat walking track connects the two road ends (with a stream crossing at the Puketui Road end), providing good views along the Tairua River. Off this track, a number of circular track options are available.

Water Race Tunnels Track (1.9 km loop)

Take the Paton Stream to Hihi Trig Track off the Puketui Walk and veer left onto the Water Race Tunnels Track. This follows the old water race that took water from the Third Branch Stream across the Tairua River via three tunnels to drive the Broken Hills Battery. The original race was 3,300 m long. At the southern end, the track joins the Water Race Link Track, where you can either drop down a stepped track for 15 min to the Puketui Walk and return to where you started, or climb up to the Third Branch Track and onto Collins Drive.



Remains of the foundations of Broken Hills Battery.

Third Branch Track (1.3 km loop)

At the southern end of the Puketui Walk, the Third Branch Track follows the stream then picks up an old tram line, climbing up the hill before levelling out and sidling around the hill to the east end of Collins Drive. A circuit is possible via the Water Race Link Track back to Puketui Walk.

Collins Drive Loop (2–3 hr return from road end car parks, 3.5 km circuit)

The 500-m long Collins Drive provides an opportunity to experience a real underground mine system. This tunnel was driven through the hill in a fruitless attempt to find a quartz reef with payable ore. Dangerous shafts have been boarded up. You will need a torch for the 15-min boardwalk through the tunnel. Turn your torch off near the tunnel entrances to see the glow-worms.

The easiest approach to Collins Drive is via the Third Branch Track (Puketui Road) or Water Race Tunnels Track (Puketui Valley Road). A small landing 5 min short of Collins Drive marks the start of an aerial cableway that carried ore hoppers to the Golden Hills stamper battery. From the west end of Collins Drive, a 10-min climb to the ridge will bring you to the Main Range track. Turn to the east (right) and you will return to the Puketui Valley road end car park, approximately 1 hr away. Check out the views from the lookout on the way.

Paton Stream to Hihi Trig/Kauaeranga valley road end (times below)

This starts out as a walking track from the northern end of Puketui Walk and leads to a track junction (1 hr). At this point you can turn left to Collins Drive, or continue on to the Hihi Trig (another 3 hr) and then further down into the Kauaeranga valley (5–6 hr from trig). Please note that the track changes to a tramping track at the junction; it is not well formed and is steep in places, so is more suited to experienced and well-prepared trampers.



Tōwai — close-up of flowers.
Photo: Terry Greene



Fivefinger. Photo: Dave Crouchley

Wildlife

The Broken Hills area provides a home for a wide variety of wildlife living amongst tall forest trees and rotting logs, in tranquil pools as well as the fast-flowing river, and in the dark damp tunnels of past mining days.

- Listen and look for tūi and bellbirds up in the trees.
- Watch out for the cave wētā as you walk through the water race tunnels.
- Spot the glow-worms near the entrance of the Collins Drive Tunnel.
- Search for kōura and kōkopu in the small pools and streams at night using a torch.



Bellbird/titapu



Cave wētā



Kōura



Kōkopu

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others



leave no trace
NEW ZEALAND