

*Plan and prepare*

# PAPAROA TRACK



Duration: **3 days hiking**  
**2 days mountain biking**

Distance **55.1 km hiking**  
(one way): **56.2 km mountain biking**



Great Walks season:  
**All year**



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

# PAPAROA TRACK

Experience our newest Great Walk – a purpose-built, shared-use hiking and mountain biking track within the Paparoa National Park on the West Coast of the South Island. This Great Walk crosses the Paparoa Range, taking you through alpine tops, limestone karst landscapes and thriving rainforests.

Once completed, the Pike29 Memorial Track will lead from the Paparoa Track to the site of the former Pike River Mine.

The Paparoa Track provides walking and cycling access through the remote and spectacular wilderness of the Paparoa National Park. The track is challenging in poor weather. You will need a good level of fitness and the right equipment.

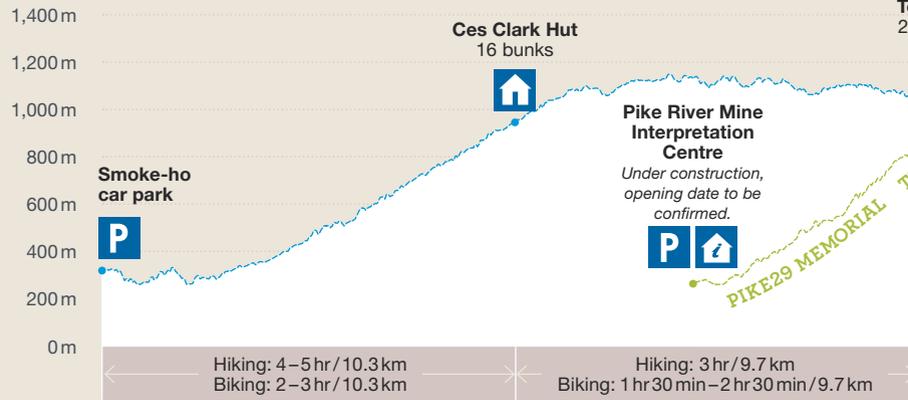
The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough, and the track may be muddy. This brochure describes a 3-day hike for independent non-guided walkers travelling from Smoke-ho car park to Pororari River car park.

There is also a 4-day hike option, spending the first night at Ces Clark Hut. This is a good alternative for families.

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## Elevation profile & track guide



**Day 1: Smoke-ho car park to Moonlight Tops Hut**

 **Hiking: 7-8 hours, 20 km**  
**Biking: 3 hr 30 min-5 hr 30 min, 20 km**

The Great Walk begins at its southern end at Smoke-ho car park near Blackball, about a 45-minute drive from Greymouth. Beginning on the historic Croesus Track, with remnants of the area's gold mining history, the track ascends through beech and podocarp forest before reaching Ces Clark Hut.

This part of the track is much rougher than the rest of the Paparoa Track because of its historic nature.

Beyond the hut you pass through alpine scrub and tussock, and you will be rewarded with expansive views of Grey River/Māwheranui to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west. Moonlight Tops Hut provides spectacular views.

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Photo: Stewart Nimmo;  
Photo: Jason Blair;  
Photo: Shaun Barnett/Black Robin Photography

MAIN PHOTO: Photo: Stewart Nimmo

COVER: Photo: Jason Blair

Moonlight  
Tops Hut  
0 bunks



PAPAROA  
TRACK

Track under  
construction,  
opening date to  
be confirmed.

Pororari Hut  
20 bunks



Pororari  
River  
car park  
(exit for  
hikers)



Inland  
Pack Track  
junction

Waikori  
Road  
car park  
(exit for  
bikers)



P car  
park

hut

interpretation  
centre

Hiking: 5–7 hr / 19.1 km  
Biking: 4–5 hr / 19.1 km

Hiking: 4–5 hr / 16 km  
Biking: 2 hr 30 min–3 hr 30 min, 17.1 km



Day 2: Moonlight Tops Hut to Pororari Hut

➤ Hiking: 5–7 hours, 19.1 km  
Biking: 4–5 hr, 19.1 km

On day 2, open tops give way to alpine forest stunted by the harsh environment. The Paparoa Track winds along the top of the escarpment, with steep cliffs and stunning views. About half-way to Pororari Hut, you descend from the escarpment through ancient podocarp forest. The track then follows the ridge above Tindale Creek to Pororari Hut. Keep an eye out for the Lone Hand, a gnarled outcrop of rock on the north side of the Pororari River.



Day 3: Pororari Hut to Pororari River car park

➤ Hiking: 4–5 hours, 16 km  
Biking: 2 hr 30 min–3 hr 30 min, 17.1 km

The Paparoa Track descends and follows the upper Pororari River valley, until it joins an old track built to establish settlement in the upper valley. The track sidles along a spectacular gorge and descends through beech forest interspersed with northern rātā. At the junction with the historic Inland Pack Track, hikers and mountain bikers diverge: hikers follow the track beside the Pororari River through the lower gorge; mountain bikers must exit into the Punakaiki River valley, ending at Waikori Road car park. Both pass through lush rainforest with glades of nīkau palms.



# Mountain biking



Photo: Jason Blair

The Paparoa Track is a shared-use track for hikers and mountain bikers. This is the first purpose-built, shared-use Great Walk constructed by the Department of Conservation. Biking on the track is allowed year-round.

## 2 days and 1 night

Smoke-ho car park to Moonlight Tops Hut: 20 km, 3 hr 30 min – 5 hr 30 min

Moonlight Tops Hut to Waikori Road car park: 36.2 km, 6 hr 30 min – 8 hr 30 min

Note: Once the Pike29 Memorial Track is open, there will be route options that include the Pike River Mine Interpretation Centre.



### **MTB grade: Advanced (Grade 4)**

A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and obstacles that are difficult to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.

### **Can I do it?**

The Paparoa Track is a tough ride and not to be underestimated – to ride safely you need to be fit, experienced and have good equipment. This should include a well-maintained mountain bike, a comprehensive bike tool kit, quick release chain link, spare tube/fresh patch kit, pump/CO<sub>2</sub> pump, cable ties and duct tape. For a list of essential equipment, see [www.mountainsafety.org.nz/activities/mountain-biking](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/activities/mountain-biking).

### **You can expect**

A well-formed 56.2 km track maintained to Advanced: Grade 4 mountain biking standard, with numerous swing and suspension bridges.

Plan to spend one night on the track.

You will encounter changeable weather conditions, including extremely cold temperatures, rain, high winds and possibly snow; steep slopes and generally avoidable obstacles; and track sections that are prone to flooding.

Refer to the 'Know before you go' section of this brochure for more information.

### **Respect others, respect the rules, respect the track.**

#### **Follow the mountain biking rules below:**

- You are not permitted to take a mountain bike into any hut or shelter, or onto hut porches.
- Stay on the formed and designated mountain bike tracks.
- Electric bikes are not allowed on the track.
- Bikers must give way to walkers.
- Night riding is not permitted.

#### **You are responsible for:**

- Obeying the mountain bikers code. The track is shared with hikers and other bikers – show respect for other users.
- Following signs and other markers that clearly identify where mountain bikes can be ridden and where they are not allowed.

# Highlights

1

Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to bring birdsong back to our Great Walks.



Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atihua



AIR NEW ZEALAND

2

Photo: Stewart Nimmo (nimmophoto.co.nz)

3

Photo: Baptiste Maryns

4

Photo: Stewart Nimmo

5

Photo: Lynne Maguire

- 1 Explore the spectacular **Pororari River Gorge**, with dramatic limestone cliffs, beech forests and glades of subtropical nikau palms.
- 2 Sit back and enjoy **incredible sunsets** over the Tasman Sea from Moonlight Tops Hut.
- 3 Follow in the footsteps of gold miners on the **historic Croesus Track**. Take a side trip to Garden Gully to see gold-mining remains, including a 1930s miner's hut and a century-old quartz crushing battery (45 min return).
- 4 Admire the **stunning waharoa** at the Paparoa Track entrances and exits. These waharoa were carved by a team of Ngāti Waewae carvers, led by Mahana Coulston.

## Conservation story

- 5 The Department of Conservation works in partnership with Air New Zealand (DOC's National Partner for Conservation) and the Paparoa Wildlife Trust in the south-east ranges bordering the Paparoa National Park to increase the size of existing populations of threatened native birds. These partnerships enable a pest-control trapping network to be maintained across 15,000 hectares of land. This programme, in conjunction with the 12.5-hectare pest-proof kiwi crèche on the Atarau plains and the Paparoa great spotted kiwi/rooa project, is delivering significant gains for kiwi and many other species.

[www.pwt.org.nz](http://www.pwt.org.nz)

## No public access to Pike29 Memorial Track

Access to the Pike29 Memorial Track is not possible or safe until after the official track opening.

At the time of printing this publication, large sections of the Pike29 Memorial Track are still under construction. The opening date is yet to be confirmed.

Visit [www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack) for updates.



Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)



Photo: Tom Hopkins (DOC)

## Places to stay

There are three Great Walk huts on the Paparoa Track. Most walkers stay at Moonlight Tops Hut (20 bunks) and Pororari Hut (20 bunks), for the standard 2-night, 3-day journey. For the alternative 3-night, 4-day journey, walkers will also stay at Ces Clark Hut (16 bunks). All three huts must be booked in advance. There are no campsites.



### Great Walks huts

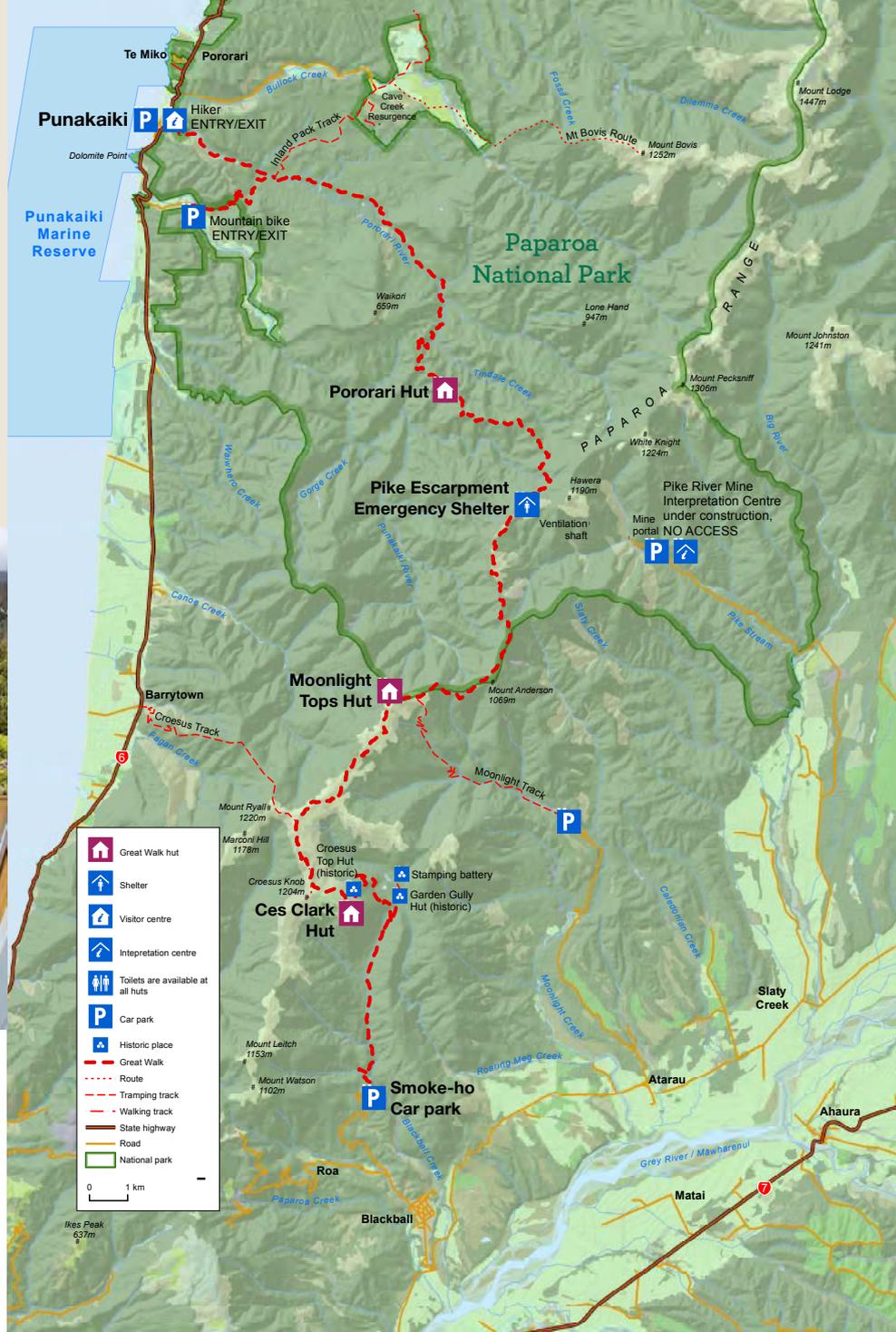
Visit [www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack) for prices.



### Great Walks campsites

Campsites may be opened on the Paparoa Track.

Check [www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack) for updates on construction and estimated opening dates. When open, these campsites will be able to be booked through the DOC booking system.



Moonlight Tops Hut. Photo: Mark Neilson

**Ka Manuhiri Tūāraki**  
To our esteemed visitors  
**Te Kāhui Whakaeke**  
From near and afar

**Nau mai, Haere mai**  
Greetings and Welcome

**Tauti mai rā**  
In awe of beauty

**He Ara Pounamu**  
Paparoa

**Ko Paparoa kai ruka**  
Trails of old

**Ko Paparoa kai raro**  
Steeped in richness

**Papaki ka Tai o Poutini**  
Waves glistening like Pounamu

**Ka pō, ka ao ka awatea**  
from darkness, became light,  
cometh the day

**Tihei Mauriora**  
Share the breath of Life

**Ka manu a Tāne**  
Our song of Tāne

**He rau aroha**  
A teardrop of love

**He ara Tīpuna**  
For our Departed

**Paparoa te Whenua**  
Who lie in these Lands

**Hei Hā!**

Kāti Waewae,  
Poutini Kāi Tahu



**PIKE29  
MEMORIAL  
TRACK**

### Remembering the Pike 29

The 29 men killed in the Pike River Mine disaster will be remembered in a number of ways. At the families' wishes, the mine site and surrounding area has become part of the Paparoa National Park.

A track from the Paparoa Track to the former mine site is currently under construction. This track has been dedicated to the men and named the Pike29 Memorial Track in their honour.

Planning is underway for a memorial and interpretation centre at the Pike River Mine site, where displays will tell the story of the mine and the 2010 disaster. The mine portal and associated memorial will be a place for remembrance and quiet reflection.

**OPENING DATE  
TO BE CONFIRMED**

## What do I do next?



Start off at [www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack) for more information.



Book your huts online at [bookings.doc.govt.nz](http://bookings.doc.govt.nz).



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – download the Great Walks packing list and make sure you have everything you need for a 3 day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at [www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack).



Check the weather, and make sure you've downloaded and printed your **ticket and official track guide**. You can also pick up a track guide and get the latest weather updates from the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre.



**All set!** Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on [facebook.com/docgovtnz](https://www.facebook.com/docgovtnz).

For in-depth local knowledge, visit: Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 731 1895

Email: [paparoavc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:paparoavc@doc.govt.nz)

[www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks](http://www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks)

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## Getting there

The nearest towns are Blackball, Greymouth and Punakaiki. The track can be accessed by road at:

- **Smoke-ho car park** at the end of Blackball Road, 8 km north of Blackball
- **Pororari River Track car park** on SH6, 1.2 km north of the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki
- **Waikori Road car park** on SH6, 2.4 km south of the Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki.



## Know before you go

It is **important** to plan your trip thoroughly to ensure you stay safe and have a great time. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 simple rules to help you #MakeItHomeNZ.

- 1. Plan your trip.** Travel times vary greatly in New Zealand, so carefully planning your route is essential. Seek local information about what to take and allow enough time for the journey. Book accommodation, transport and transfers to the start/end of track early.
- 2. Tell someone your plans.** Leave your intentions with a trusted contact, including your trip details and emergency contact information. It could save your life if things go wrong. Head to [mountainsafety.org.nz](http://mountainsafety.org.nz) for more information.
- 3. Be aware of the weather.** New Zealand's weather is very changeable. Always prepare for the

worst. Check [metservice.com](http://metservice.com) for the most up to date info.

- 4. Know your limits.** Always follow the track markers and signposted tracks. You can expect to walk up to 8 hours a day depending on your fitness level. If you get into trouble don't make a bad situation worse. Think **STAR** – Stop / Think / Assess / React.
- 5. Take sufficient supplies.** With New Zealand's changeable weather many hikers are frequently caught out by isolated local conditions. Carry – and expect to use – rain jackets all year round. Take an extra day's supply of food and an emergency shelter. Don't rely on cellphone signal alone for communication. Food and drinks are not available to purchase at Great Walks huts. Plan to be self-sufficient.

## Paparoa Track safety

- Weather in the Paparoa National Park is changeable with annual rainfall averaging around 6,000 mm (235 inches). Heavy rain can occur with little warning, and unbridged streams are dangerous in flood. Be prepared for rain, heavy fog, snow and high wind, especially on the exposed sections of the track. If the weather becomes severe, stay put in a hut or turn back until conditions improve.
- Adverse weather can damage the track significantly. These areas may be marked by signs and warning tape, although you should check with the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre or Greymouth DOC Office before your walk.
- The Pororari River (between Pororari Hut and Punakaiki) can experience severe flooding events

and some sections of the track can become impassable during times of heavy rain. No river crossings are required but proceed with caution over bridges.

- Go to [www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/paparoatrack) 'Know before you go' section for detailed safety information, and 'What to take' section for a comprehensive gear list.
- Paparoa Track is a shared-use walking and mountain bike track all year around. Bikers must give way to hikers. Check [doc.govt.nz/mountain-bikers-code](http://doc.govt.nz/mountain-bikers-code) for information.
- If you are hiking or biking the track in winter, check snow and ice conditions before you leave and allow extra time. If in doubt, consider changing your trip to another day.

**Remember – your safety is your responsibility**