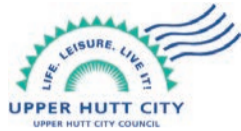




From valley to sea

Running alongside the Hutt River from Hikoikoi Reserve, Petone to Birchville, Upper Hutt, the 29km Hutt River Trail is an easy scenic walk and cycle path. It also allows access to the river for swimming, fishing and kayaking. The Trail runs the entire length of the eastern river bank. There are trails on all but two sections of the western side to provide shorter loops between bridges. The Hutt River Trail will eventually run as far as the Te Marua area of Kaitoke Regional Park to link with the Rimutaka Rail Trail.



For more information, contact:

Hutt River Ranger
Wellington Regional Council
Flood Protection
Mabey Road
Lower Hutt
0800 496 734
huttriver.ranger@gw.govt.nz

Wellington Regional Council
1056 Fergusson Drive
Upper Hutt
0800 496 734

Metlink
(train and bus information)
801 7000
www.gw.govt.nz

Upper Hutt Visitor Information Centre
04 527 2141
www.upperhuttcity.com

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Cover photo and totara at Poets Park by Jessica Dewonap.



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History

Two million years of movement in the Wellington earthquake fault line underneath the Hutt Valley has helped form one of the region's most powerful rivers. Today the river flows from the southern Taranaki Ranges through the Hutt Valley to the Petone foreshore.

The Hutt Valley has been occupied since at least 1200 AD when the Ngai Tara first settled there. They named the river Te Awa Kairangi or "the highly esteemed river" as it was a valued transport route and an important source of food. However, it was also difficult to defend and has seen significant battles, loss of life and a frequent change of guardians.

The first planned European settlers to the area arrived in the summer of 1839-40. They were welcomed by Te Ati Awa who had established settlements at Hikoikoi, Owihiti, Pito-one, Waiwhetu and Ngauranga.

At that time the vegetation of the Hutt Valley depended on its proximity to the river and the coast. A sandy flat near the seashore supported the native sedge pingao. Behind this flat were swampy marshes, which extended about 3 kms up the valley. This wetland was full of raupo, harakeke (flax) and toetoe, and was criss-crossed by winding tidal creeks. Kahikatea, matai, pukatea, rata and rimu occupied the whole of the rest of the Hutt Valley, with totara, tawa and beech forests favouring the drier sites.

The 1855 earthquake raised the level of the Hutt Valley making the previously navigable river impassable and draining the surrounding wetland. Although the valley could now be extensively settled, several devastating floods slowed the population growth.

The first steps to guard against floods were taken during the 1890s. Since then most of the native vegetation has been cleared and replaced with pasture and houses. Forest remnants are found, usually near the riverbanks, which were inclined to flood and unattractive for building or farming. Barton's Bush in Trentham Memorial Park is a remnant of the large kahikatea wetland in the upper valley, while Keith George Memorial Park near Silverstream contains rimu, rata, tawa, matai and beech forest.



Over 100 years later, the Hutt Valley is a popular residential, commercial and recreation area. Still, its particular geography – a narrow floodplain

confined by steep valley sides – emphasises the risks posed by the river. Greater Wellington Flood Protection is responsible for minimising this risk, particularly when the river unleashes its full power.

About the Trail

In the early days foot tracks along the banks of the Hutt River extended to the Wairarapa over Rimutaka Hill. The Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs and Greater Wellington developed the idea of the Trail during the 1990s as a reminder of these tracks and recognise 50 years of Rotary in the Hutt Valley. These organisations have signposted, surfaced and marked the Trail, with assistance from Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, service groups and government work schemes.

Many parts of the Trail are next to private land. Please stay on the trail and respect private property. Most of the Trail has a gravel surface although some down-river sections have been sealed. Some parts are narrow and may be affected by high water flow, particularly the Taita Gorge, near Silverstream.

The Greater Wellington Hutt River Ranger patrols the river environs five days a week, including most weekends.



How to get there

The Hutt River Trail starts at Hikoikoi Reserve on Petone's Marine Parade, or you can enter at many points along the Trail from here to Upper Hutt, 27 km away. These points include the bridges across the river: Hutt Estuary, Ava Rail, Ewen, Melling, Kennedy-Good, Silverstream, Moonshine, Totara Park, Harcourt Park and Birchville Bridges.

The Ava, Melling, Pomare, Manor Park and Silverstream Railway Stations are handy to the Trail, together with various bus services.

Phone Metlink on 801 7000 for train and bus timetables or visit www.metlink.govt.nz.



Walking, running and cycling

In many areas tracks are located on both sides of the Hutt River offering a range of short loops. You can also walk or cycle the Trail by entering and leaving at many points. The following guide describes individual sections and gives approximate walking times.

Petone to Ava

Distance: 2.5km each way

Time: 1.5 hours return

Once the site of a stockaded Ngati Awa village, Hikoikoi Reserve is reached from Petone's Marine Parade. As you pass the mud flats and boat sheds to the Estuary Bridge and cross the river you will see the large pipe on the bridge that carries water from Wainuiomata to supply Wellington City. Continue to the Ava Rail Bridge and re-cross the river using the footpath beside the railway line.

In Sladden Park you will find a playground, fitness circuit and toilets. Nearby is the former Gear Island, now Shandon Golf Course, which occupies most of the western bank. Please keep to the stopbank and show consideration to golfers.

Ava to Melling

Distance: 2.5km each way

Time: 1.5 hours return

Land skirmishes in the 1840s-50s saw Fort Richmond established in 1845 near the site of this bridge. Now one of the most urban parts of the Trail, this section is a very popular walk and cycle route. Ewen Bridge, near the centre of this section, offers a shorter loop or figure-of-eight alternative.

Melling to Avalon

Distance: 2.5km each way

Time: 1.5 hours return

On the site of the substation was once Maraenuku Pa. At Harcourt Werry Drive you can either rejoin the stopbank at Kennedy Good Bridge, or visit the Avalon Park with its playground and boating pond. Across the bridge, near Belmont School, is the historic site of Motutara Pa and later the Belmont Railway Station.

Avalon to Silverstream

Distance: 8km

Time: 2 hours one way

There is a good swimming hole just north of Fraser Park and the Silverstream area of the Trail is very popular for dog walking and picnics. Once under the Pomare rail bridge and into the confines of Taita Gorge, the Manor Park Golf Course can be seen across the river. On this side the former willow tree nursery extends to the Silverstream bridges. It is a 1 km walk or cycle from the Silverstream bridges to the Silverstream Railway Station.

Silverstream to Moonshine

Distance: 4km each way

Time: 2 hours return

The eastern Trail is very popular with scenic views over the river and Wellington Golf Course providing a buffer between the Trail and local suburbs. Fly fishers get the best access from the service road on the eastern bank.

Bartons Bush in Trentham Memorial Park is the only remaining example of river terrace forest in the region, and offers playgrounds and bush walks that link with the Trail.

Moonshine to Totara Park

Distance: 4km

Time: 1 hour one way

Upstream from Moonshine Bridge, large trees shade pleasant picnic spots at Poets Park. This part of the river was a film site for The Great River Anduin in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Turn off River Road (SH2) to reach the Trail. It follows service tracks along the eastern riverbank to Totara Park Bridge.

There is a good swimming hole downstream from the confluence of the Whakatikei River. The rapids upstream are a popular challenge for kayakers.

Totara Park to Birchville

Distance: 2.5km each way

Time: 1.5 hours return

The open parklands, remnant trees and rocky outcrops in this area are a natural highlight of the Trail. The abutments of the historic swingbridge at Maoribank corner are still visible and there is good swimming in this part of the river.

Harcourt Park is a scenic backdrop to an adventure playground, motor camp and outdoor stage. Popular with Lord of the Rings fans, it was the film site of Isgard, the ancient Gondorian fortress. Here you can either cross the footbridge and continue upstream along the west bank or follow Akatarawa Road to Birchville.

Near the confluence of the Hutt and Akatarawa Rivers there are popular swimming holes, car parks and river rafting access.

Birchville to Te Marua and Kaitoke Regional Park

The Trail continues under the Birchville bridges and takes on a more rural aspect with views over the river to farmland and bush. Passing through two stands of remnant kahikatea, totara and beech it reaches SH2 just north of the intersection with Topaz Street. Return to the bridges the same way or via Topaz Street and Gemstone Drive.

Beyond Te Marua are other tracks leading through Kaitoke Regional Park and the SH2 underpass to Tunnel Gully and the Rimutaka Rail Trail, which links to the Wairarapa.

KEY

- Entrances
- Public road
- Park Ranger office
- Park building
- Main trail
- Railway Station
- Distance
- Toilets
- Playground
- Horseriding
- Swimming
- Wheelchair access
- Motor camp
- Campground
- Fishing



Caring for the Hutt River Trail

- Dogs are allowed on the Trail but must be under control and on leads where signs state. Please remove droppings.
- Use the rubbish bins provided or take your litter home.
- Horse riding is permitted on formed service roads. Keep off the grassed river berm, stopbanks and pedestrian trails.
- Mountain biking is allowed on all sections of the Trail. Always wear a helmet, show consideration for other Trail users and observe the mountain bike code.
- Picnic tables and barbecue sites are often situated near swimming holes. Gas barbecues are permitted. Light no fires except with the ranger's permission.
- The Hutt River is an excellent trout fishery. Salt-water fishing is popular on and below the Hutt Estuary Bridge. You must have a fishing licence (available from local sports retailers).
- Wear a helmet and flotation vest.
- Motor vehicles are permitted only on formed roads. Slow down and give way to other users. Keep off the grassed river berm, stopbanks and pedestrian trails.
- No trail bikes, ATV quads or trikes are permitted on the Hutt River Trail.