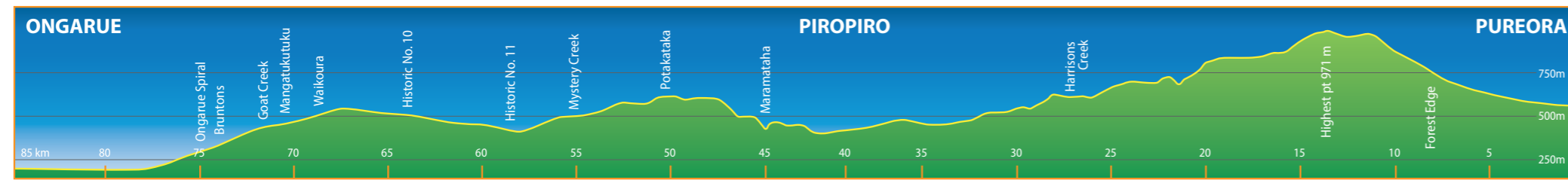
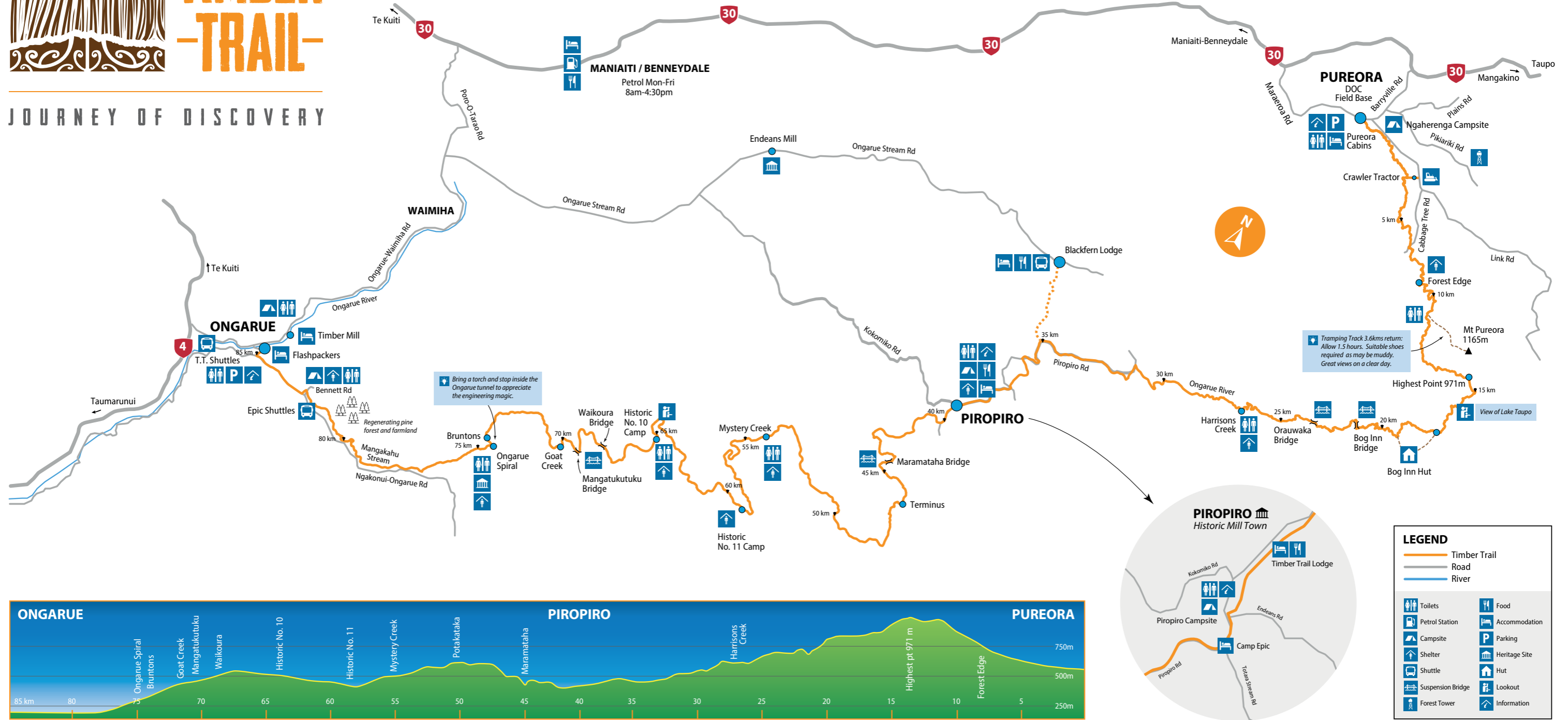




# TIMBER TRAIL

JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY



**GRADE** 2-3

**LENGTH** 85 km | Total climb: 420m

**DURATION** 2 days | Ride all year: be prepared for adverse weather conditions at all times.

**LOCATION** Central North Island

**DIRECTION** While the trail may be ridden in either direction, riding north to south (Pureora to Ongarue) makes the most of the topography.



FOR MORE INFORMATION     [timbertrail.nz](http://timbertrail.nz)

SUPPORT THE TIMBER TRAIL    [timbertrail.nz/support](http://timbertrail.nz/support)





## The Timber Trail is one of 22 Great Rides of Ngā Haerenga/The New Zealand Cycle Trail. Most of the trail passes through Pureora Forest Park, managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC).

Thank you to Maraeroa A and B, Te Rongoroa Trust, the Tombleson family and the Blackburn family for their generosity in allowing access to their land for the trail.

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS & STORIES  
HELP SPREAD THE WORD



FOR MORE INFORMATION

[timbertrail.nz](http://timbertrail.nz)

Opened in 2013, the purpose-built Timber Trail celebrates the heritage and the passion of New Zealanders for this special part of the King Country.

Local Māori knew this mountainous area as Te Pureora-ō-Kahu, the place where Kahu was restored to health after searching for her lost son. Up until the 1840's, Pureora was covered in dense virgin forest, alive with birdlife. As European settlement expanded, demand for timber grew and forests across Aotearoa were felled. Pureora Forest was one of the last areas in the North Island to be harvested.

In 1946, the loggers moved in and cranked their saws, extensively logging large tracts of native forest, replacing them with exotic plantations. In 1978, environmentalists climbed high into the canopy to protest against further logging, resulting in the government preserving it for future generations. Today Pureora Forest Park is one of the rarest and most precious stands of broad-leaf podocarp forest in the North Island, and one of the last remaining intact podocarp forests in the world. It is home to a range of remarkable and often rare native wildlife, including some remarkable birds.

## HIGHLIGHTS

New Zealand's Timber Trail offers rich rewards – awesome riding on a range of terrain, amazing bridges, ancient forests, unique wildlife, Māori lore, and captivating history brought to life through excellent interpretation panels.

Ride highlights include:

- huge trees such as rimu & tōtara
- eight spectacular suspension bridges, three more than 100m long
- Mt Pureora's mysterious Cloud Forest and lookouts
- curious timber milling relics, including the world's only bikeable railway spiral
- on-track accommodation from camping, glamping & luxury lodges
- delightful birdlife including the kōkako, kākā, tūi & North Island robin
- varied terrain including fun, flowing single track & a historic tramline
- excellent information panels along the whole trail

## BE PREPARED

This is a remote wilderness trail, with an average riding time of 5 hours for each half.

- carry sufficient water & food, along with warm clothes, waterproof jacket and bike spares
- a PLB (personal locator beacon) is also recommended
- cellphone reception is limited (tip: turn phone to flight mode to save battery for photos and emergencies)
- follow the trail markers, and do respect the private landowners' rights
- drinking water is available from any of the Official Trail partners along the route. Water from streams or shelters should be treated before drinking.
- toilets are located along the route; we recommend carrying own toilet paper & hand sanitiser
- ride within your ability; keep left around blind corners and when there are oncoming riders
- watch for quad bikes & other vehicles on shared sections of trail & road crossings
- carry out all rubbish with you and dispose of it carefully

MORE INFORMATION [timbertrail.nz/plan-ahead](http://timbertrail.nz/plan-ahead)



**LATEST TRAIL INFO, STATUS & FEEDBACK:**  
[timbertrail.nz](http://timbertrail.nz)



**HELP KEEP PUREORA BEAUTIFUL!**  
Invasive weeds, Kauri dieback disease and other soilborne diseases are a threat to Pureora Forest Park's native plants and wildlife. Before you arrive, please clean your bicycle, shoes and other riding equipment. Together we can make a difference.

## PUREORA TO PIROPIRO

40km, Grade 2–3/easy–intermediate, 4–7 hours

The trail begins at the map sign. Two large pou are a good place to pause and contemplate the adventure to come.

The first 15km of the ride is a gentle climb around the slopes of Mt Pureora, towards the trail's high point. Ride through Pikiariki Ecological Area, virgin rainforest saved from milling, where amazing podocarp trees dwarf all who pass underneath. The predator trapping programme in the area ensures the sound of birdlife in the morning is a welcoming cacophony – you may even be fortunate enough to have kākā parrots swoop past with their chattering call.



After 3km, take the marked turnoff for a short detour to the historic Crawler Tractor. Left here by a bushman who was recovering tōtara for fenceposts, the 1920s machine illustrates the grunt required to break in the land.



For the next 5km, the trail passes through an open, felled area and scrub, crossing a few logging roads enroute. As the trail climbs, don't forget to pause to admire the expanding views.



The forest edge shelter is a peaceful place for a break. From there, the trail heads further up, into the Cloud Forest – a mystical place with stunted trees draped in hanging moss. It's 5km from the shelter to the trail's 971m highpoint.



At the 11km mark, a short tramping track leads to Mt Pureora trig (1,135m) – well worth the return trip if weather and time are on your side. Sturdy footwear is required.

The Timber Trail flows downhill for the next 8km, with glimpses of Lake Taupō appearing through the forest to the east. Keep your eyes and ears open for kākā and kererū.



At the 22km mark, the first of eight significant bridges is reached. At 115m long, this suspension bridge is quite the engineering feat. Tick off Bog Inn, Orauwaka, Angels Rest and Harrisons Creeks.



On reaching the 33km mark, pause to appreciate the old Stump House. Both curious and humorous, it's a testament to the unique lifestyle of the old tōtara fellers.



The Black Fern Lodge turnoff is located at 35km. Home to whio, rainbow trout and a massive waterfall, the lodge makes a memorable overnight stop.



The Timber Trail continues for another 5km through pumice fields and gravel sections to reach Piropiro. The site of an old mill town, it now offers mid-point accommodation:

- Piropiro Department of Conservation campsite (category: basic)
- Timber Trail Lodge: full service, off-grid accommodation (bookings required)
- Camp Epic: self-catering camping & glamping options (bookings required)

## PIROPIRO TO ONGARUE

45km, 4–7 hours

This half of the Timber Trail begins with an undulating ride through tawa, tānekaha and regenerating podocarp forest.



At the trail's 44km mark, Maramataha Bridge is a highlight of the whole ride. At 141m long and 53m high, it also ranks as the third-longest suspension bridge in New Zealand. On reaching the other side, it's a steady 2.5km climb to reach the ridge, from where it's an easy, flowing descent through mossy cuttings and past historic campsites to the Ongarue Spiral.



At the 47km mark you reach the Ellis & Burnand Tramway Terminus, the end of the line for old bushmen. The trail follows its route downhill, passing remnants of the pioneering past such as workers huts, cuttings and bridges – another 18 of them before you reach Ongarue! Information panels retell the stories of this fascinating past.

Stop at the Historic No.11 camp (58km) with its original hut – complete with graffiti – and the turntable just down the track.



Tick off the Waikoura, Waione and Mangatukutuku suspension bridges along the way.



Yet another trail highlight is the Ongarue Spiral (75km), a loop in the main tram line that you complete by way of a tunnel. An ingenious engineering solution, the spiral eased the grade for the timber trams that wound through this terrain.



The homeward leg passes through scrub and plantation forest before crossing a sealed road where the track skirts the edges of farmland. (Thanks for respecting and acknowledging the generosity of private landowners for access through this section.)

The Timber Trail journey ends at Bennett's Road car park, from there it's another 2km of riding along a quiet road to reach Ongarue.

Enjoy the satisfaction of having completed an awesome adventure. Be sure to share the tale with your friends – and with us, too. We'd love to hear your feedback!

Support the trail: [timbertrail.nz/support](http://timbertrail.nz/support) to donate, report maintenance issues or share your feedback

