

FREE



OPENING 2019

PAPAROA TRACK *and* PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK



Duration:

2–3 days hiking
1–2 days mountain biking



Distance (one way):

55 km hiking
55.7 km mountain biking



Great Walks season:

All year



greatwalks.co.nz

Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

PAPAROA TRACK

EXPERIENCE our newest Great Walk – a purpose-built, shared-use walking 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. It provides breathtaking views across to the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana and over the Tasman Sea.

From the Paparoa Track, the 10.8 km Pike29 Memorial Track leads to the site of the former Pike River Mine. The track is a memorial to the 29 men who were killed in the 19 November 2010 Pike River Mine disaster.

The Paparoa Track is open all year and provides walking and cycling access through the remote and spectacular natural wilderness of the Paparoa National Park. This track is challenging in poor weather conditions.

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



Duration:
2–3 days hiking
1–2 days mountain biking

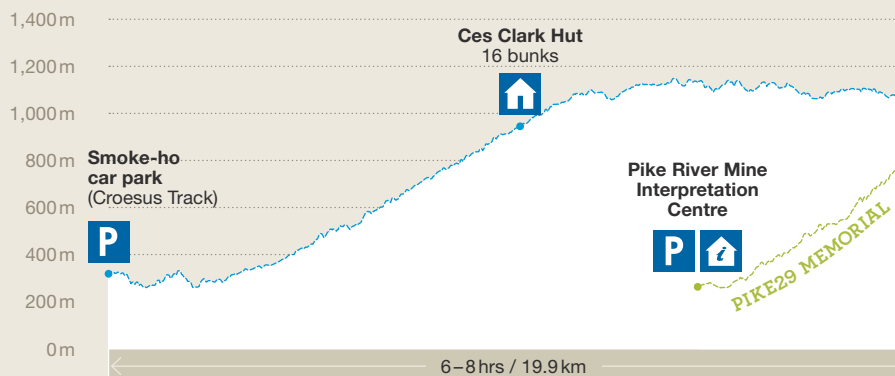


Distance (one way):
55 km hiking
55.7 km mountain biking



Great Walks season:
All year

ELEVATION PROFILE & TRACK GUIDE



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

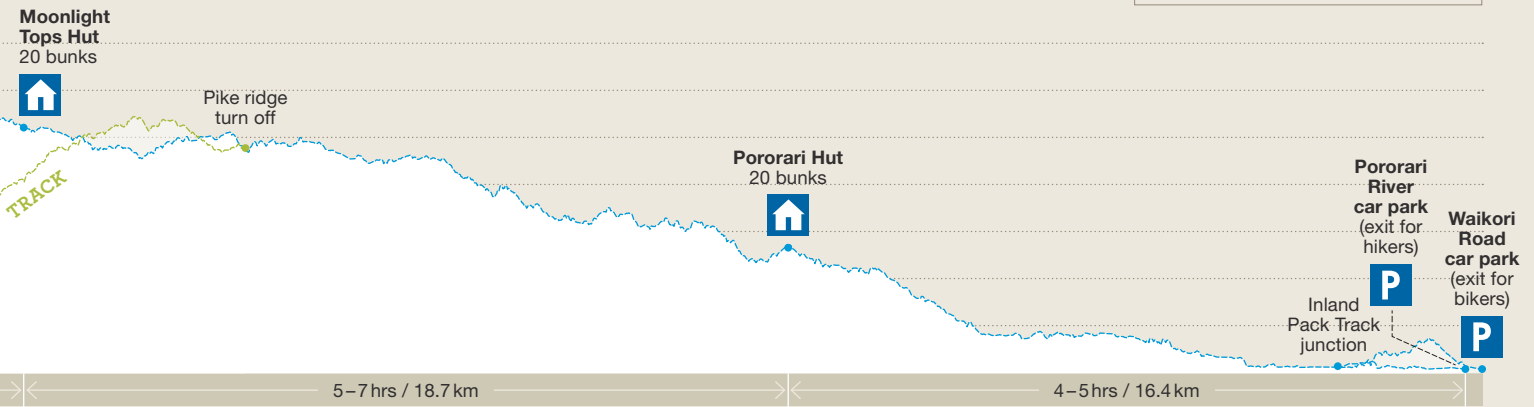
6–8 hours, 19.9 km

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 existing Croesus Track, with remnants of the area's gold mining history, the track ascends through beech and podocarp forest before crossing alpine scrub and tussock. 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 across the Punakaiki River headwaters to the Pike Stream escarpment and north to the Paparoa National Park.

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Croesus Track, Jason Blair (katabatic.co.nz); Moonlight Tops and Pike basin escarpment, Stewart Nimmo (nimmophoto.co.nz); Upper Pororari River, Jason Blair

MAIN PHOTO: Moonlight Tops hut site, Stewart Nimmo

COVER: Moonlight Tops and Pike basin escarpment, Stewart Nimmo



5–7 hours, 18.7 km

On day 2, open tops give way to alpine forest stunted by the harsh environment. Along this section of the track you meet the junction of the Pike ridge with the main Paparoa Range. Here the Pike29 Memorial Track to the Pike River Mine site begins. Beyond the junction, the Paparoa Track winds along the top of the escarpment where the landscape is strikingly dramatic with sheer drops and stunning views down the Pike Stream in the east, stretching west to Punakaiki and north-west to Westport. About halfway to Pororari Hut, you descend from the escarpment to walk through ancient podocarp forest under towering cliffs. The track then follows the spine of the Tindale ridge to Pororari Hut. As you traverse the ridge, look north to see the Lone Hand, a curious and gnarled outcrop of bedrock on the north side of the Pororari River.



4–5 hours, 16.4 km

The Paparoa Track then descends and follows the upper Pororari River valley, just above the river itself, until it joins an old pack track built to establish settlement in the upper valley. The track sidles a spectacular gorge and descends towards the coast through beech forest interspersed with northern rātā. From here you will catch glimpses of the lower Pororari River Gorge. At the junction with the historic Inland Pack Track, walkers and mountain bikers diverge: walkers follow the Pororari River Track which sidles the lower gorge with its striking limestone cliffs; mountain bikers descend into the Punakaiki River valley, ending at Waikori Road car park. Both pass through lush rainforest with serene glades of nikau palms.



HIGHLIGHTS

1

Photo: Neil Silverwood
(neilsilverwood.com)

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to help bring native birds back to the beautiful Great Walks.

AIR NEW ZEALAND 

2

Photo: Stewart Nimmo (nimmophoto.co.nz)

4

Photo: Ben Norris

Photo: Baptiste Maryns

5

Photo: Lynne Maguire

- 1 Explore the spectacular **Pororari River Gorge**, with its dramatic limestone cliffs, beech forests and glades of subtropical nīkau palms.
- 2 Sit back and enjoy **incredible sunsets** over the Tasman Sea from the Moonlight Tops Hut.
- 3 Explore the area's unique **mining history** – gold on the Croesus Track, coal in Pike Stream, and uranium prospecting in the Pororari River.
- 4 Enjoy **spectacular views** of Paparoa National Park and the Tasman Sea to the west and the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana to the south from the top of the towering escarpment in the Pike basin.

5 CONSERVATION STORY

The Department of Conservation works in partnership with the **Paparoa Wildlife Trust** in the south-east ranges bordering the Paparoa National Park. Through this partnership, the Paparoa Wildlife Trust maintains a trapping network that effectively controls between 10,000 and 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/roaroa project, has delivered significant gains for kiwi. www.pwt.org.nz

PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK

Photo: Neil Silverwood (neilsilverwood.com)

REMEMBERING THE PIKE 29

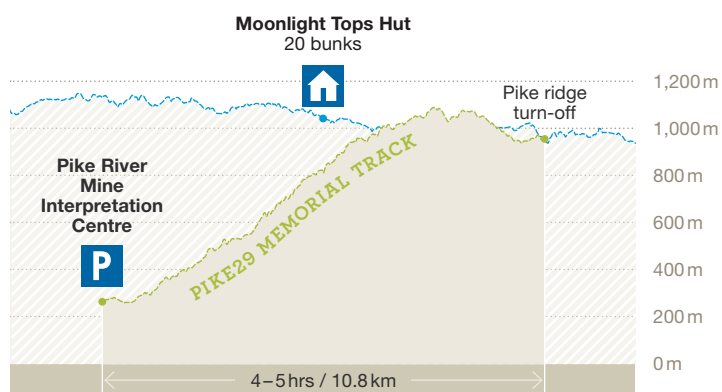
The 29 men killed in the Pike River Mine disaster will be remembered in a number of ways. At the families' wishes, the mine site and surrounding area has become part of Paparoa National Park. The 10.8 km track from the former mine site to the Paparoa Track has been dedicated to the men and named the Pike29 Memorial Track in their honour. An interpretation centre is being developed 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 quiet reflection.



Duration:
4–5 hours hiking
2–3 hours mountain biking



Distance
(one way):
10.8 km



Pike ridge turn-off to Pike River Interpretation Centre



4–5 hours, 10.8 km

From the junction of Pike ridge with the main Paparoa Range, the track heads east towards the Grey valley. The ridgetop offers views into Pike valley and the Pike River Mine vent shaft to the north, and bush-clad valleys to the south. The vegetation consists of low alpine scrub and dwarf, weather-beaten alpine forest that could have come from a scene in a Tolkien text. The track then drops down into the Pike valley through virgin podocarp and red beech forest to its terminus at the Pike River Mine Interpretation Centre.

MOUNTAIN BIKING



The Paparoa Track and Pike29 Memorial Track are shared-use tracks for walkers and mountain bikers. This is the first purpose-built, shared-use Great Walk to be constructed by the Department of Conservation in its history. You can mountain bike the tracks year-round.

Can I do it?

The Paparoa and Pike29 Memorial Tracks are tough rides and not to be underestimated – to enjoy your ride you need to be fit and have good equipment. Plan to spend 1 night on the track, although fitter and more experienced riders have 1-day ride options.

Track 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.

You can expect

A well-formed 55.7 km track maintained to DOC Great Walk and Advanced: Grade 4 mountain biking standards, with numerous swing and suspension bridges.

You will encounter changeable weather conditions, including extremely cold temperatures, rain, wind 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.

Ride options

📌 2 days and 1 night

Smoke-ho car park to Moonlight Tops Hut: 19.9 km, 3 hr 30 min – 5 hr 30 min

Moonlight Tops Hut to Waikori Road car park: 35.8 km, 6 hr 30 min – 8 hr 30 min

📌 2 days and 1 night

Pike River Mine Interpretation Centre to Pororari Hut: 24.1 km, 5 hr 30 min – 6 hr 30 min

Pororari Hut to Waikori Road car park: 17.1 km, 2 hr 30 min – 3 hr 30 min

📌 1 day

Smoke-ho car park to Pike River Mine Interpretation Centre: 36.1 km, 6–8 hours

Rules

- You are not permitted to take a mountain bike into any hut or shelter, or onto hut porches.
- You are not permitted to take a mountain bike off the formed and designated route.
- Electric bikes are not allowed on the track.
- Bikes must give way to walkers.

You are responsible for:

- Obeying the mountain bikers code. The track is shared with walkers 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.
- Removing your bike from the national park should it break down.

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.



PLACES TO STAY



DOC operates 2 Great Walks huts on the Paparoa Track, which **must be booked in advance all year round**. The Moonlight Tops Hut (20 bunks) is located approximately 1,000 m above sea level on the alpine tops of the Croesus-Moonlight section of the new track, and the Pororari Hut (20 bunks) is located approximately 550 m above sea level on the bush-clad Tindale ridge in the headwaters of the Pororari River.

Note: The Ces Clark Hut is not part of the Great Walk and is of a lesser standard, eg no cookers available.



Great Walks huts

Pricing to be decided.

Huts have bunks, mattresses, heating, gas cooktops, toilets, and a water supply. A DOC ranger may be present. The huts do not provide food, cooking utensils or showers.

The Paparoa Track is due to open in 2019. What do I do then?



- 1 Start off at greatwalks.co.nz/paparoa for more information.



- 2 Book your huts and campsites online or at a DOC Visitor Centre from March 2019.



- 3 Organise your transport to and from the track.



- 4 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.



- 5 Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at greatwalks.co.nz/paparoa. Make sure you have left your intentions with a trusted contact at adventuresmart.org.nz.



- 6 Check the weather, and make sure you've 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.



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

OPENING 2019

At the time of printing this publication, large sections of the Paparoa Track and Pike29 Memorial Track and its facilities are under construction.

Although some sections that use existing tracks or routes (Croesus Track, Moonlight Route, Inland Pack Track and Pororari River Track) will operate as usual, access to the full Paparoa Track and Pike29 Memorial Track will not be possible or safe until after the official opening.



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New Zealand Government

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 #makeithome.

- 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.** Safety is your responsibility. Leave your intentions – including your trip details and emergency contact information – with a trusted contact. It could save your life if things go wrong. Head to adventuresmart.org.nz for more information.
- 3. Be aware of the weather.** New Zealand weather is very changeable. Plan for the worst, expect the best. Check 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 conditions 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 and Pike29 Memorial 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.
- Adverse weather can damage the track significantly. These areas will be marked by signs and warning tape, although you should check with the Punakaiki or Greymouth DOC Visitor Centre before your walk.
- The Pororari River (between the Pororari Hut and Punakaiki) can experience severe flooding events. No river crossings are required but proceed with caution over bridges with rivers in flood. Some sections of track in the Pororari valley may become flooded during times of heavy rainfall.
- Go to greatwalks.co.nz/paparoatrack 'Know before you go' section for detailed safety information, and 'What to take' section for a comprehensive gear list.
- Paparoa and Pike29 Memorial are shared-use walking and mountain bike tracks all year around. Bikes must give way to walkers. Check doc.govt.nz/mountain-bikers-code for safety information.

Remember – your safety is your responsibility