

Introduction

Canterbury's foothill forests contain remnants of the native vegetation that once existed throughout the region. Their location, within an hour's drive from Christchurch, makes them popular with trampers, hunters and picnickers. This leaflet covers Oxford Forest area. Other sheets include – Mt Thomas Forest, Glentui & Ashley Gorge and Mt Grey/Maukatere.

How to get there

Some 56 km north-west of Christchurch there are four road approaches to the forest from the township of Oxford. Approach Oxford from Christchurch via the northern motorway (Highway 1) then westward on Tram Road or Highway 72.

Coopers Creek car park

At the western end of Oxford, take Woodside Road. 7 km northwest turn right onto Mountain Road to the Coopers Creek car park.

View Hill car park

From Oxford drive west on Highway 72 for about 3 km, then turn off along Woodstock Road. After about 10 km turn right up Ingrams Road which turns left into Perhams Road. An AA signpost indicates the turn-off to the start of the Wharfedale Track where the View Hill car park is located. In times of heavy rain two fords on Perhams Road may become impassable.

Eyre River area

From Oxford drive west on Highway 72 for about 3 km, then turn off along Woodstock Road. After about 14 km take the road leading right (Trig Road). This passes a small exotic pine forest before crossing a ford close to the forest edge.

Lees Valley

About 6 km north of Oxford, on Ashley Gorge Road is the Lees Valley access. At Mt Pember Station, 1.5 km from the Lees Valley Bridge, a DOC signpost on the left denotes a very rough four-wheel drive track that runs next to the Townshend River and up to Townshend Hut. The key for the locked gate is obtainable from Mt Pember Station **only** if a week's notice is given (Do not phone after 8.00pm)



Protect plants and animals
Remove rubbish
Bury toilet waste

Keep streams and lakes clean
Take care with fires
Camp carefully

Keep to the track
Consider others
Respect our cultural heritage

Enjoy your visit
Toitū te whenua
(Leave the land undisturbed)

About the area

Oxford Forest covers an area of 11,350 hectares. Formed walking tracks take you through tawhai/mountain beech and scattered podocarp forests. During times of high fire risk, campfires, barbeques and access to some areas may be prohibited.

Symbols



Walking track



Tramping track



Mountain biking

Walking tracks



Coopers Creek to Ryde Falls Track (2½ hours one way)

This well-formed track initially crosses cleared private land with views of the plains and surrounding hills. It enters the beech forest and finally descends to Coopers Creek to view the five-tier Ryde Falls. Return the same way
Note: no dogs allowed on private land and walkers must keep to the track.
'Rydes Tramway' route is not maintained and is overgrown.



View Hill car park to Ryde Falls (2 hours one way)

Turn off the Wharfedale Track about 20 minutes into the forest from the car park. Descend to Coopers Creek to view Ryde Falls.



Wharfedale Track (4½ hours one way)

Wharfedale Track was formed to open up Lees Valley. Work began in 1879 and in seven years £4,537 (about \$500,000

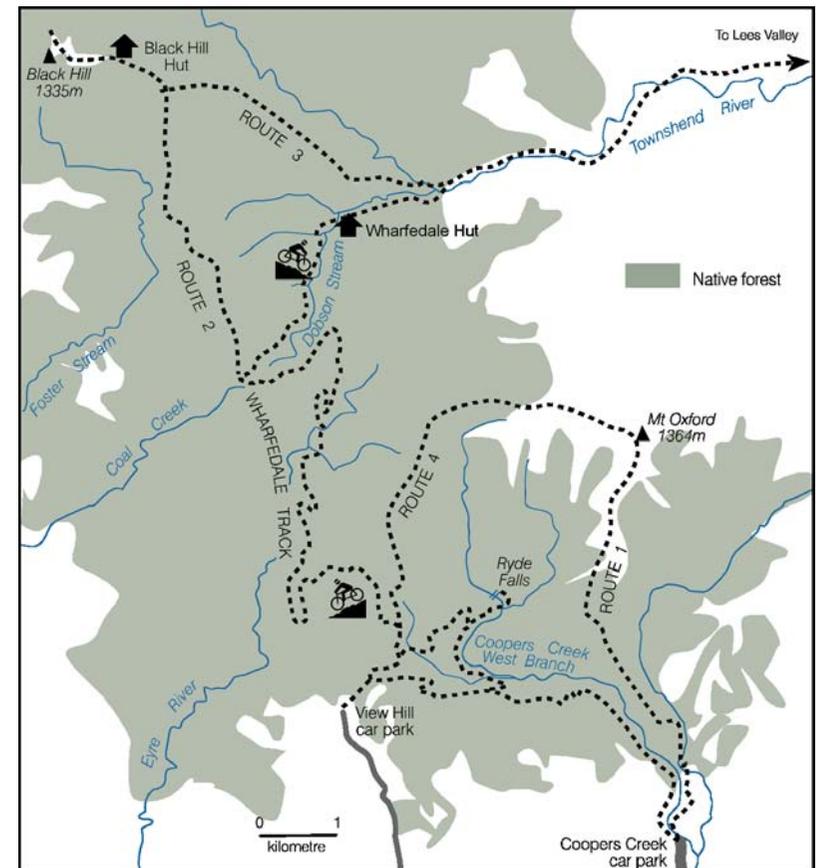
equivalent today) had been spent before it was abandoned as a possible road. This long, easy-graded track was used as a stock route in the 1890s and now provides access for trampers.

Wharfedale Hut to Lees Valley (2½ hours one way)

This is an extension of the Wharfedale Track. It crosses tussock flats, mostly on a four wheel drive track, returning to Lees Valley Road 1.5 km north of the Ashley River/Rakahuri bridge.

If you wish to drive vehicles over this section of track you **must** contact Mt Pember Station. Wharfedale Hut is a basic hut, sited on the true right of Dobson Stream. The old Townshend Hut has been removed.

An alternative route exists between Shifton and Storm Streams (Route 5). It is not well marked but avoids the need to cross the Townshend River in times of high river levels.





**Link Track – View Hill to
Coopers Creek car park
(2½ – 3 hours one way)**

Turn off Wharfedale Track about 10 minutes into the forest from the car park and join Ryde Falls Track. Follow this track east to Coopers Creek car park.

Tramping routes

Use these descriptions in conjunction with Infomap 260 Sheet L34 (Puketeraki).



**Route 1 Coopers Creek car park to
Mt Oxford Summit
(4 hours one way)**

Start from Ryde Falls Track, cross the west branch of Coopers Creek and climb gradually through scattered pockets of beech forest, and then more steeply through snow tussock. From the summit of Mt Oxford (1364 m) there are good views.
An alternative descent (Route 4) returns to the car park at View Hill via Wharfedale Track.



**Route 2 Wharfedale Track to Black Hill Hut
(3 hours one way)**

Begin at Wharfedale Track junction north of the saddle between the Eyre and Townshend catchments (Grid Ref 308764) and climb steeply onto the ridge between Foster and Dobson Streams.
The hut is a one-ticket hut with 6 bunks and a woodstove. From the hut further unmarked routes give access to Salmon Creek and the Puketeraki Range.



**Route 3 Townshend River to Black Hill Hut
(3 hours one way)**

Start at the confluence of the Townshend River and Dobson Stream near Townshend Hut (Grid Ref 334789) and climb a beech-covered ridgeline to Black Hill Hut.



**Route 4 Wharfedale Track to Mt Oxford
(3 hours one way)**

Branch off Wharfedale Track about 20 minutes from View Hill car park (Grid Ref 328729) and follow a forested ridge that opens onto tussock grassland around Mt Oxford.

Please remember

Hunting

A permit is required to hunt in the Oxford Recreation Hunting Area. Obtain permits from DOC Waimakariri Area Office, phone 03 313 0820.

Mountain Biking

You can mountain bike the Wharfedale Track. As this is also a popular walking track, we ask you to be considerate and give way to other track users.

Fire

Take care when lighting fires and where provided use the permanent fireplaces. A fire permit is required for all other campfires. Lighting fires is prohibited during extreme fire risk and some areas or tracks may be closed.
Dial 111 in case of fire emergency.

Dogs

Dogs (excluding hunting dogs by valid permit only) are permitted on the tracks but must be on a leash at all times. Please clean up after your dog.

No dogs allowed on private land.

Wasps

Wasp numbers are high from January to March each year. It is recommended that forest users carry wasp first-aid kits as a precaution. These are generally available from chemists.

Further information

To find out more, or purchase maps contact:
Waimakariri Area Office
15 Albert Street
Rangiora
Ph 03 313 0820
waimakariri@doc.govt.nz

Department of Conservation
Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre
Arthur's Pass
Ph 03 318 9211
arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz

Published by:
Department of Conservation
Private Bag 4715
Christchurch
Feb 2007
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DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards or
conservation emergencies
For fire and search and rescue call 111

Oxford Forest



CANTERBURY FOOTHILLS

