

Rimutaka Forest Park

The 22,000 ha Rimutaka Forest Park encompasses much of the Rimutaka Range. The main entrance to the park is from the Catchpool Valley recreational area in the Wainuiomata Valley with smaller entrances via road ends found in the Wairarapa.

It provides visitors with tramping, hunting and walking opportunities in a wild, natural landscape.



Cross Creek

GETTING THERE

From Featherston turn onto Moore St, Featherston, continue into Western Lake Rd, and turn right onto Cross Creek Road.

VEHICLE ACCESS

Unsealed road from Western Lake Road. Good parking facilities.



Attractions: Historic rail site.



Rimutaka Rail Trail

Walking track. Length: 5 hr one way (2 hr mountain bike ride)/18 km



This track follows the old Rimutaka Incline, a unique rail system built in 1878 and designed to traverse the steep eastern side of the Rimutaka Range.

See next pages for more historic information.

The rail trail is a gently graded 18km walk or mountain bike ride. This makes it an ideal trip for families with children. The trail is also popular with dog walkers.

Education resources

For education resources on the Rimutaka Incline please visit:
<http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/getting-involved/students-and-teachers/field-trips-by-region/wellington/rimutaka-forest-park>

Historic site



Rimutaka Rail Trail

An ambitious government project to construct a national railroad to help attract immigrants began in 1871. When building a connection from the Wairarapa to Wellington the mountainous terrain posed a large challenge to the construction.

Using a system that English engineer John Fell had patented in 1863 and successfully worked on Mt Cenis in the European Alps, New Zealand decided to attempt the 4.8 km Rimutaka Incline. This was an extremely innovative and bold engineering solution. It involved a centre rail—elevated above the running rail—gripped by a series of horizontal wheels fitted to the specially designed engines and brake vans which took trains up and down the incline.

The system was considered a temporary measure but the world wars and depression meant that the replacement was not ready until 1955, by which time the journey was slow and expensive.

Today, the incline is regarded as a special part of New Zealand's historic heritage and one of the 10 most significant railway heritage sites in the world. It has made its mark in the following ways:

- It is technically remarkable how maintenance staff kept the original 1877 equipment operating reliably at full power for 77 years.
- For the Wairarapa community, the aged equipment became a cultural legend, with many personal experiences of the journey recorded and published. A children's story was even written about it—Freddy the Fell Engine, by Peter Walsh.
- For railway staff and their families, Cross Creek became New Zealand's most legendary 'railway settlement'. The closure of the incline on 29 October 1955 attracted large crowds and national media coverage.





Pahaoa Scientific Reserve, Wairarapa South Coast

Waiorongomai

GETTING THERE

From Featherston travel down the Western Lake Road for approximately 18–20km after the Lake Shore Reserve. If you cross the Waiorongomai stream you've gone too far. Access is required from R.P. or C.G. Matthews 06 307 77 41

VEHICLE ACCESS

Unsealed short road with plenty of car parking (no camping)



Waiorongomai Hut walk

Tramping track. Length: 1.5 hr one-way/4.8 km

Walk up the Waiorongomai stream and track to hut.

Papatahi / Onoke access

GETTING THERE

From Featherston travel down the Western Lake Road past the East/West access road and look for signs for Onoke access. If you cross the first one-way bridge you've gone too far.

VEHICLE ACCESS

Park on side of Western Lake Road. Not suitable for large vehicles.



Wharepapa Hut walk

Tramping track. Length: 2.5 hr one-way/6.5 km

Easement through Onoke farm, to Battery Stream and Wharepapa River and hut.



Ocean Beach. Photo: Joe Hansen



Wharepapa Hut over Papatahi Crossing (to Catchpool Valley)

Length: 10 hr one way / Approximately 20 km

Corner Creek / Ocean Beach

GETTING THERE

From Featherston travel down the Western Lake Road to the beach and follow round to Corner Creek.

VEHICLE ACCESS

Unsealed road for at least 3 km. Suitable for large vehicles.



Mukamuka track to Mt Matthews (South Saddle)

Tramping track. Length: 4 hr one way/6.2 km

Walk down beach to the big Mukamuka stream and follow stream-bed to track over south saddle.

Symbol key

	Camping		Lighthouse
	Camping not permitted		Historic site
	Lodge accommodation		Lookout
	Hut accommodation		Fur Seals
	Motorhome		Mountain biking
	Picnic shelter		Mountain biking not permitted
	Picnic table		Swimming
	Toilets		No swimming
	Water from stream		Hunting
	BBQ (wood or gas)		Hunting not permitted
	Cookers / Electric Stove		Fishing, surfcasting
	Dogs permitted on leash		Surfing
	Dogs not permitted		Diving
	No vehicles		Boating
	Fireplaces		Bird watching