

Going caving? Be prepared

You need to take . . . all year round

Helmet, warm hat and gloves

It can be cold inside the cave even in summer.

One torch per person at least.

Headlamps are best as they leave your hands free.

Tie hand-held torches around your neck. If they drop in the stream they are impossible to find in the dark.

Have spare batteries.

Warm tops – Polyprop or wool are recommended.

Wetsuits are best.

Icy water, especially from snow-melt in spring is bitterly cold

Shorts or wool/ polypropylene leggings

Jeans and cotton trousers are dangerous when wet – they transfer precious heat out of your body.

Strong secure footwear

Running shoes or boots with wetsuit socks are good.

Have spare clothing to change into when you finish your caving adventure!

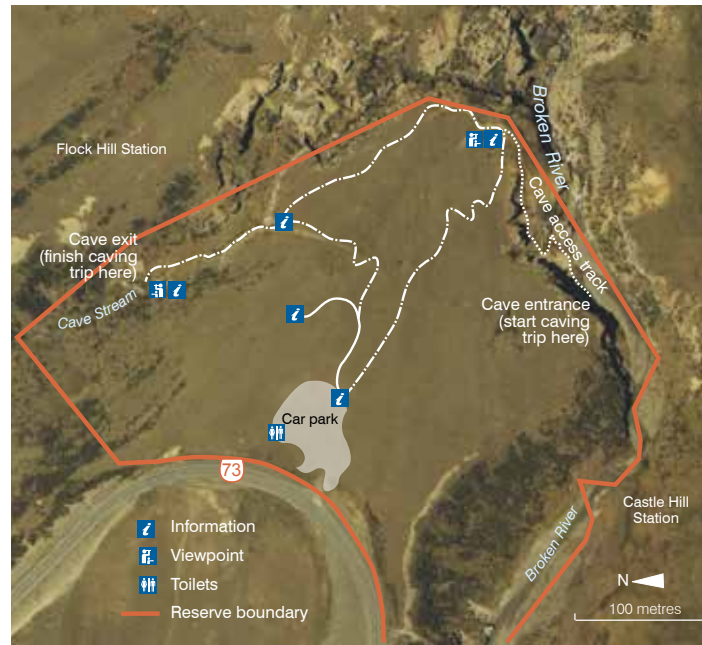


Photo: J Carr

For your safety

Limestone is unstable – beware of fractured/loose falling rocks and steep drop-offs. Keep to the formed tracks at all times and supervise young children.

Fire: Fire restrictions apply to all DOC land. Check with the local information centres or DOC offices for the current fire status. Dial 111 in fire emergency



Public access outside the reserve only by prior permission from Flock Hill and Castle Hill stations.

Cavers note: river crossings are required on the access track. If the river is high do not attempt this, or enter the cave.

Further information

To find out more, or purchase maps contact:

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Published by
Department of Conservation
PO Box 349
Rangiora 7440
December 2017

New Zealand Government



Cave Stream Scenic Reserve

CANTERBURY



Photo: S Mankelaw

 Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Cave Stream Scenic Reserve sits among spectacular limestone outcrops, with views of the Craigieburn and Torlesse ranges.

A 594-metre-long cave within the reserve is one of the most outstanding natural features in the Canterbury region. The open country is ideal for picnicking and gentle short walks.

How to get there

Private transport

The reserve is on the Great Alpine Highway (SH 73), between the Broken River Road bridge and Craigieburn Forest Park entrance.

Public transport

Bus companies service SH 73 from Christchurch and Greymouth. Pick-ups and drop-offs must be pre-arranged.



Landforms

The reserve is in Castle Hill basin – a low depression bounded by fault-lines along the Craigieburn and Torlesse mountain ranges. The name 'Castle Hill' comes from the castle-like forms of the prominent limestone outcrops. Karst topography is the name given to a limestone landscape. Rainwater combines with soil elements (primarily carbon dioxide) to produce a weak acid, which over time trickles into joints and cracks, dissolving the limestone.

The cave was formed by the limestone dissolving over time, diverting Cave Stream from its original surface channel. The abandoned channel is left as a dry valley near the upstream end of the cave.

The form of the limestone bluffs is characteristic of solution weathering of limestone. Depressions in the ground's surface, or sinkholes, can be seen in the reserve. They are typical in a karst region. A line of three sinkholes can be seen on the river terrace immediately above the cave. These have let water in to enlarge a joint that runs down the cave's length, and are responsible for some of the vertical development of the present cave. The terraces upstream of the cave inlet were formed many thousands of years ago by a glacial-fed river.

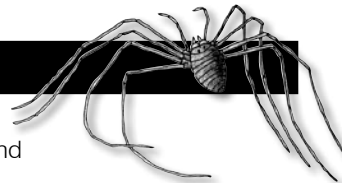
Plants

The vegetation of the reserve has been greatly modified. Original plant life would have been low forest of tōtara, broadleaf/kāpuka, kōwhai and other small-leaved shrubs. Burning, oversowing with introduced grass species, and grazing has left introduced grasses as the main vegetation. The only remaining areas of original vegetation are an assortment of native species in the limestone bluffs and crannies. Large shrubs found here include matagouri, mountain wineberry/makomako, *Coprosma propinqua*, a few *Hebe cupressoides*, *Helichrysum intermedium*, and *Melictyus alpinus* (porcupine shrub). There are also a few ferns and smaller shrubs including the characteristic limestone fern *Asplenium lyallii*, the fern *Cystopteris tasmanica* and a threatened native forget-me-not *Myosotis colensoi*.

... and animals

There is an abundance of invertebrate fauna in and around the limestone reserve.

In the 'dark zone' of the cave, a rare species of arachnid (spider), the cave harvestman, is found. This feeds on insects and other small cave creatures. It is known to live only in this cave and one other on the West Coast.



History

Evidence of Māori occupation in the Cave Stream area includes rock-art, artefacts and signs of seasonal camps. On the ridge above the reserve an old Māori backpack was found in a small rock shelter. It is made from flax, with a wooden frame, and has broad straps. Intricately woven flax over the frame could stretch in both directions to

accommodate the pack's contents. Finding this pack confirmed traditional knowledge that Māori used packs, similar to the modern day pack, for carrying loads. The pack is estimated to be 500 years old. It can be seen in Canterbury Museum as can the replica shown here made by Aue Davis and Wiremu Solomon.



Going through the cave

The cave passage meanders and twists in pitch darkness for 560 metres between the two entrances. It takes approximately one hour to go through. There is a 3-metre waterfall at the inlet end.

You must be fully prepared with the right equipment – check details overleaf.

Cavers are recommended to enter the cave at the outlet end and walk against the flow of the stream. To assist climbing out the inlet end of the cave, a fixed ladder ascends beside the waterfall. A chain and steps help to get along the overhang ledge to the exit.

Scour holes, terraces and small waterfalls can be seen while going through the cave.

Watch the water level in the cave. It varies and can be quite deep in places. Normally the deepest section (at the first corner from the cave outlet end) is just above waist-level on an adult. Children must be able to walk through the cave independently; recommended minimum height is 120 cm.

WARNING: Do not attempt to enter if the stream is high, the water discoloured or foaming.



Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other aquatic pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering a waterway, and when moving between waterways.

