Mountain biking in Canterbury

CANTERBURY

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhāi
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Mountain biking on conservation land in Canterbury

Opportunities for mountain biking on public conservation land are steadily growing. This brochure outlines many tracks that have been made available for bikers on land managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) from Twizel to Hanmer. Most of these are shared or multi-use tracks. There is something here for most riding abilities.

In some areas, DOC has encouraged the use of some trails over others, to reduce the impacts on other users. These are trails that are sufficiently wide and well formed to withstand multi-use, and have good visibility.

In other places, riders may travel along public access easements through private freehold land. All these tracks are well-marked with signs and orange marker poles. Please keep to the public easement track, leave gates as you find them, and do not disturb stock.

Mountain bikers are one of many groups of visitors to our conservation lands. Please be aware of the effects of your activities on others and follow the mountain bikers code of conduct. Contact your local DOC office for updates on track conditions and access before heading out on a ride.

Note: times given are approximate and one way unless a round trip (loop) is described.

Track grades

**Grade 1:** Fairly flat, wide, smooth track or gravel road.

**Grade 2:** Mostly flat with some gentle climbs on smooth track with easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks and potholes.

**Grade 3:** Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and/or poor traction. There may be exposure at the track’s outside edge.

**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 outer edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.
Hanmer Forest Park

Hanmer Springs is 135 kilometres north of Christchurch, off Lewis Pass Highway (SH 7).

The Hanmer area is considered to be the family-friendly mountain-biking capital of the South Island. It offers a range of short to long tracks suitable for beginners and young families through to more experienced riders. Mountain bikes for the whole family can also be hired in the Hanmer township.

The mountain-biking tracks are provided and maintained by a range of different organisations. This brochure only covers the tracks managed by DOC. There are at least 15 other mountain-biking tracks and routes in Hanmer, with more being developed/upgraded. A more comprehensive mountain-bike map listing all rides in the area is available from the Hanmer Springs i-SITE Visitor Centre.

Mountain bikers can also use some forestry roads. Those forestry roads used by heavy vehicles on a regular basis are unsafe for cycling. Please respect signage and locked gates. Please note that the two DOC tracks listed below are dual-use tracks that were initially for walking only. Mountain biking is now encouraged on these two tracks. Please watch out for other users, especially children and be aware that mountain bikers must give way to walkers on these tracks.

The footbridge leading from the car park, by the DOC office, to the ponds and Woodland Walk was designed for pedestrians and is planned to be replaced. In the meantime, if cyclists wish to use this bridge they are asked to push their bikes over the bridge one at a time.

Note: In periods of extreme fire risk tracks will be closed, with signposts by each track and red flags flying in the village.

1 Woodland Walk

Grade: 1
Distance: 2.8 km loop
Time: 20 minutes
Other users: walkers, picnickers

This ride is suitable for beginners and can be accessed from either Torquay Terrace or the DOC Jollies Pass car park. It passes through typical woodland, meadowland and stands of exotic trees including Douglas fir, poplar and redwood trees. It is a pleasant ride, passing over a stream and by flax wetlands and ponds where one can stop and picnic.

2 Upper Dog Stream Track, Jolliffe Saddle Track to Timberland Trail

Grades:
From Upper Dog Stream to Jolliffe Saddle – Grade 2
From Jolliffe Saddle to Jolliffe Road – Grade 4
From Timberland Trail to Woodland Walk – Grade 2

Distance: 5 km loop
Time: 1–2 hours
Other users: walkers

Mountain-bike access to this track begins at the DOC Jollies Pass car park where you follow the first section of Woodland Walk to Pawsons Road. Once the track crosses Pawsons Road, it follows Upper Dog Stream through commercially-managed forest land. About 200 metres after crossing Jolliffe Road the track joins a forestry road for about 600 metres before turning left to join up with Jolliffe Saddle Track. A short 600-m section passes through mountain beech on conservation land before entering commercial forestry land again at the saddle. This particular section is steep in places and suitable for more experienced riders.

Follow the track back to Jolliffe Road, where it joins the downhill Timberland Trail to return to Pawsons Rd and connect with Woodland Walk to take you back to the DOC car park.
**Foothill forests**

The following mountain bike tracks are historic stock routes of reasonable width and gradient and therefore are suitable as dual-purpose tracks for both cycling and walking. Cyclists please give way to walkers.

**Note:** The foothill forests are predominately black and mountain beech. Cyclical tree fall and regeneration is a natural characteristic of these forests, particularly after heavy winter snowfalls followed by strong nor-westerlies in the spring. Mountain bikers should be prepared for windfalls across tracks at any time.

Wasps are common in beech forests from January to March. It is recommended to carry anti-histamines.

**3 Mt Richardson via Blowhard Track**

**Grade: 4**

**Distance:** 10.5 km  
**Time:** 3 hours uphill  
**Other users:** walkers, horse riders

**Getting there:** Located in the Glentui catchment of Mt Thomas Forest, the area is about 60 km northwest of Christchurch, and is reached via either Oxford or Loburn.

Blowhard Track starts at the end of Maori Reserve Road near the Boys Brigade Camp. The track begins as a 4WD track and narrows to a single track as it climbs steeply to the summit of Mt Richardson (1047 m). There are excellent views of both Lees Valley and the Canterbury Plains along the ridgeline. Return the same way with a fast downhill ride.

**Note:** The lower section is steep and can be rough in places which may require some bike carrying. Bikes are not permitted on the Richardson and the By-pass tracks which also lead from the summit or ridgeline to the Glentui Picnic Area.

This is also a very popular horse-trekking route, and mountain-bike riders must give way to both horse riders and walkers.

**4 Wharfedale Track**

**Grade:** 3

**Distance:** 15 km  
**Time:** 3 hours  
**Other users:** walkers

**Getting there:** This track through beech forest starts at View Hill car park, Oxford Forest. The forest is about 56 km northwest of Christchurch. From the township of Oxford drive west on State Highway 72 for about 3 km, then turn off along Woodstock Road. After about 10 km turn right up Ingrams Road which then turns into Perhams Road. An AA signpost indicates the turn-off to the start of Wharfedale Track. In times of heavy rain two fords on Perhams Road may become impassable.

The track was formed originally as a stock route, with the intention of eventually becoming a road. The track sidles and climbs gradually through beech forests to Wharfedale Saddle (approximately 2 hours ride). It is then downhill to Wharfedale Hut. From the car park to the hut is 15 kilometres. Wharfedale Hut is close to Dobson Stream and is a standard 10-bunk hut with mattresses and heating (one hut ticket/night).

Through the forest the track surface provides technical riding over roots and rocks and bikes need to be carried over a few small creeks, but the majority is easily ridden.

A further 2 km from the hut, a bridge crosses Townsend River and a 4WD track leads through farmland to Lees Valley Road (8.5 km). **Note:** This 4WD track crosses Townsend River twice and may be impassable if river levels are high.

Stay on the track as it crosses private farmland, and be aware this track may be closed at times for farming operations. Contact the DOC Waimakariri Area Office (03) 313 0820 for the latest information.

More adventurous and experienced riders can continue along Lees Valley Road to Ashley Gorge Road and then back to Oxford. The round trip is approximately 75 km.
**Port Hills & Banks Peninsula**

**5 Godley Head Scenic Reserve**

*Grade: 4+*

**Distance:** 9.4 km loop  
**Time:** 2–3 hours  
**Other users:** walkers, runners

**Getting there:** From Sumner, take Wakefield Ave and Evans Pass Rd, then left on Godley Head Rd to reach the car park at the end.

Ride Godley Head car park to Taylors Mistake, return. The track traverses tussock-covered hills and has excellent views of Lyttelton Harbour and Pegasus Bay. The last section descends down a part of the track known as ‘Anaconda Track’ before ending up at Taylors Mistake Beach.

The section of Godley Head Walkway from Taylors Mistake to Breeze Col on the summit road is dual-purpose, available for walkers and cyclists. Ride slowly and give way to walkers.

From Breeze Col a purpose-built mountain-bike track traverses a well-graded track to the Godley Head car park. A more challenging track returns to Breeze Col on the Lyttelton Harbour side of the summit road. This ride connects with others on neighbouring council land, all the way to Evans Pass and beyond. Refer to the Christchurch City Council brochure, *Port Hills mountain biking* for full details of rides on the Port Hills.

[www.ccc.govt.nz/Cycling/TracksRides/PortHills.asp](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Cycling/TracksRides/PortHills.asp)

**6 Motukarara to Little River Rail trail**

*Grade: 1+*

**Distance:** 21 km  
**Time:** 2–3 hours  
**Other users:** walkers, runners

**Getting there:** Motukarara is on SH 75 south of Christchurch towards Akaroa. Begin at Park Road near Motukarara Racetrack, or Catons Bay, or Kaituna Valley, and ride to Little River.

This is an easy, well-defined trail perfect for families. It takes in great views of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere and the surrounding countryside and there are various entry/exit points along the way for riders who want to shorten the trip by choosing a section. Water is not available on this route.


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**Craigieburn Forest Park**

Craigieburn Forest Park extends from the Waimakariri River to the Wilberforce River—with braided rivers, beech valleys, tussock grasslands, alpine screes and rugged mountain peaks over 2000 metres high.

The forest park is approximately 110 km from Christchurch on the Great Alpine Highway (SH 73) towards Arthur’s Pass and is accessed via the signposted side road to Craigieburn Picnic Area.

Within the forest park, a network of ski field roads and dual purpose tracks make this a very popular area for mountain biking. Please be aware at all times of other vehicles on these roads.

The following mountain-bike trails all start at Craigieburn Picnic Area.

**7 Lyndon Saddle Loop**

*Grade: 3*

**Distance:** 8.8 km loop  
**Time:** 1–3 hours  
**Other users:** walkers

Ride for 1 km along SH 73 to Craigieburn ski field road. The Craigieburn Valley Track starts approxialy 3 km up this road. Turn left at the next junction and follow the easier sidling track up to Lyndon Saddle. The right fork at the
saddle (affectionately known as ‘The Luge’ by mountain bikers) is a long undulating and twisting trail to Broken River ski field road. Follow this road back to the picnic area.

Note: Mountain bikes are not permitted on the other two tracks starting from the Lyndon Saddle junction. These tracks lead either up Helicopter Hill or to down to Craigieburn Picnic Area and are very popular family walks.

8 Craigieburn Valley Loop

Grade: 4

Distance: 15 km loop
Time: 2–4 hours
Other users: walkers

Ride for 1 km along SH 73 to the Craigieburn Valley ski field road. Ride up this road to the head of the valley, beyond the ski club buildings and onto Craigieburn Valley Track. This track provides an undulating, and in places, technically challenging single-track ride either back to the ski field road, or to Lyndon Saddle as described previously.

9 Broken River ski field road

Grade: 3

Distance: From picnic area to club hut—6 km
Time: 1 hour 30 min–2 hours
Other users: walkers

The road leaves Cragieburn Picnic Area following Cave Stream and climbs to Jacks Pass. The road follows the valley beyond the locked gate, winding its way to Windy Corner and on to the club huts. Beyond the day lodge on the ski field, sections of the road are steep and loose but the ski basin can be accessed by bike.

10 Broken River ski field road to Camp Saddle

Grade: 3

Distance: 2.5 km from tractor shed to Camp Saddle
Time: 2 hours uphill
Other users: walkers

Camp Saddle Track starts opposite the ski club tractor shed beyond the locked gate on Broken River ski field road. An old 4WD track narrows as it steadily climbs through beech forest. The track then comes out into open tussocks; poles mark the route to Camp Saddle.

Enjoy the magnificent views from the tussock and scree saddle before returning the same way.

11 Dracophyllum Flat Track

Grade: 3

Distance: 1.8 km
Time: 30 minutes
Other users: walkers, picnickers

Take the road from Craigieburn Picnic Area following Cave Stream to the Broken River ski field road. Dracophyllum Flat Track begins opposite the road intersection and gradually descends to Broken River. The pole bridge is not suitable for bikes, and riders will need to ford the river instead. The track then briefly ascends through mountain beech to a sheltered clearing which is covered by red-brown Dracophyllum, native tussock and a host of small herbs and ground-cover plants.

The clearing is a popular picnic site so please watch out for other users.
Korowai Torlesse Tussocklands Park

Korowai Torlesse Tussocklands Park is centred on the Torlesse and Big Ben ranges around Porters Pass, about 80 km from Christchurch on the Great Alpine Highway (SH 73) towards Arthur’s Pass. Maps that cover the area are 260 – K34, K35, L34, L35.

Trig M

Trig M can be accessed by routes starting from Coach Stream or Starvation Gully, about 4.5 km apart on SH 73. From Trig M there are panoramic views over Lake Lyndon. The recommended route for mountain biking is to start from Starvation Gully and finish at Coach Stream. Return to Starvation Gully via SH 73.

12 Starvation Gully to Trig M

Grade: 3

Distance: 3.2 km
Time: 1 hour 30 min uphill
Other users: walkers

From the signpost on SH 73, climb the marked track amongst diverse shrublands, traversing open ridges to reach Trig M. About half way up, the track from Coach Stream joins this track from the southeast.

13 Trig M to Coach Stream

Grade: 3

Distance: 5.5 km
Time: 1 hour 30 min downhill
Other users: walkers

Coach Stream Route branches off approximately 1.5 km down from Trig M. The route sidles alongside a ridge before passing through a gate to follow a farm track through part of Ben More Station. A gate at the end of the 4WD track leads back onto public conservation land. Follow SH 73 over Porters Pass back to Starvation Gully (an additional 4.5 km).

Note: Part of this route is an easement passing through Ben More Station and is closed for lambing from 1 October to 20 November each year. Dogs are not allowed in this section.

14 Avoca Homestead (hut)

Grade: 2

Distance: 25 km
Time: 2–4 hours
Other users: vehicles, horse riders, train crossings

Access to Avoca Homestead (pictured below) is via Craigieburn Road which turns off SH 73 near Cass. This is a gravel road which provides 2WD access to within 30 minutes walk of the homestead. There are at least six railway crossings along this road with no warnings of oncoming trains. There are also numerous gates across the road. Leave all gates as you find them.

From the 2WD car park, it is possible to continue along a track to Broken River which must be forded to reach Avoca Homestead. Access may not be possible when the river is high.

The homestead was built in 1906 and has recently undergone extensive restoration to preserve its heritage value. It features 6 bunks, 3 bedrooms, a lounge and kitchen. Category: standard (1 hut ticket/night).

From Avoca Homestead there are a few tracks behind the homestead suitable for mountain-biking day trips.
National parks

Mountain biking is permitted only on formed roads within national parks. Opportunities therefore are limited, but some unsealed access roads can provide a scenic and pleasant ride.

**Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park**

<table>
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<th>Grade: 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance: 10–15 km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time: 2 hours</td>
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<td>Other users: vehicles</td>
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Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park is reached in about 4 hours drive south of Christchurch on SH 8, turn off just past Lake Pukaki onto SH 80. Tasman Glacier Road from Aoraki/Mount Cook Village up as far as Celmisia Flat provides a great trip.

**Arthur’s Pass National Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mt White Road</th>
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<td>Grade: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance: 25 km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time: 2 hours</td>
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<td>Other users: vehicles, anglers, trampers</td>
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Mt White Road traverses along tussock flats bordering the grand Waimakariri River, with wide sweeping views up the valley. Mt White Road turns off from SH 73, about 25 km east of Arthur’s Pass village. After a kilometre the road crosses the Waimkakarin River and follows the true left through to Poulter River and then to Mt White Station. It is approximately 25 km of unsealed road from Mt White Bridge to Poulter River one way (2–3 hours).

**Hawdon Shelter**

Just after crossing the Waimakairi River, a 4WD track to the left can be followed for 2.5 km to Hawdon Shelter where camping is permitted, but bikes and vehicles are not permitted past Hawdon Shelter. This is a basic campsite (no charge).

**Andrews Shelter**

Andrews Shelter campsite is about 5 km from the bridge. It is a basic (free) campsite with a toilet and very limited facilities. Water is available from a nearby stream.

**Poulter Valley—mountain-bike trial**

*December 2007–October 2010*

From December 2007, cyclists are allowed to ride mountain bikes up the Poulter Valley in Arthur’s Pass National Park. This is a three-year, monitored trial, sanctioned by the New Zealand Conservation Authority. The trial was approved through the review of the Arthur’s Pass National Park Management Plan.

**One condition for mountain bikers**

The trip offers bikers great scenery, some challenges and two good huts for an overnight stay. Mountain bikers must keep to the specified route. Exploring the bush track beyond Casey Hut or areas beyond Trust/Poulter Hut by bike could result in access being foreclosed. Bikers are asked to be considerate of trampers and others they meet in the valley, as many have supported this trial.

**Bikers**

If you have mountain biked up Poulter Track please go to www.vorb.org.nz and take a moment to complete the feedback form that will help our monitoring programme.

**Trampers**

We are keen to hear from walkers, trampers and hunters who encounter bikers on Poulter Track. Go to the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz/poultertrial (getting involved>consultations) and fill out the feedback form to have your voice heard.

**Getting there:** Take SH 73 from Christchurch towards the West Coast. About 25 km east of Arthur’s Pass village, turn onto Mt White Road. Travel for 20 km along this gravel road until just before it crosses Poulter River. The track starts here.

**The trip**

**From Mt White Road to park boundary – Grade 3**

**Park boundary to Casey and Poulter huts – Grade 2**

**Distance:** From start of track to Poulter Hut 27 km

**Time:** 3 hours 20 min

**Other users:** trampers, hunters

The 4WD track starts where Mt White Road crosses Poulter River. Follow the 4WD track for 13 km, across river terraces...
1–2 Hanmer Forest Park
3–4 Foothill forests
5–6 Port Hills and Banks Peninsula
7–11 Craigieburn Forest Park
12–14 Korowai Torlesse Tussocklands Park
15 Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park
16–17 Arthur’s Pass National Park
18–22 Hakatere Conservation Park
23 North Opuha Hut
24–28 Tenahaun Conservation Area
29–30 Godley/Macaulay area
31–33 Tekapo/Twizel region
34–38 Ruataniwha Conservation Park
39–40 Ahuriri Conservation Park
41–42 Omarama surrounds
and fans to reach the park boundary fence. The ride is a grunt in places. This stretch follows a legal road that goes through Mt White Station, so please respect stock and farm activities.

From the park boundary fence, it is easy riding along an old 4WD track over river flats and through bush to Casey Stream and Casey Hut. This is a serviced 16-bunk hut (two hut tickets/night).

Beyond the hut, cross Casey Stream but do not take the walking track through the beech forest. Instead, the route for bikers ventures out into the Poulter riverbed for 2 km, crossing the river twice—take care. Follow another 4WD track across river flats for a further 4 km to reach Trust/ Poulter Hut—the end point for mountain bike access.

Hakatere Conservation Park

Hakatere extends over nearly 60,000 hectares in the spectacular Ashburton lakes district. There are a number of access points into the park which turn off from inland highway 77 but the lakes area is accessed from Ashburton Gorge Road, through the township of Mount Somers.

Many 4WD vehicle tracks traversing the park make for good mountain-biking but have not been listed here as they have no official gradings or track markings as yet. As more land is added to the park, more opportunities for biking will be provided.

18 Lake Emma to Lake Camp

Grade: 2

Distance: 9.5 km loop
Time: 2 hours
Other users: walkers, anglers

Getting there: The turn off to Lake Emma is marked from Hakatere Potts Road, at the end of Ashburton Gorge Road. Vehicles may be left at the car park at the end of the access track.

Follow the track that skirts Lake Emma, the outlet of which has to be either ridden or waded through. The track then edges around the bottom of Harper Range before following Balmacaan Stream towards the saddle. At the mouth of the stream, cross over to pick up the marked track towards Lake Camp.
**19 Lake Emma to Balmacaan Saddle**

**Grade:** 3

**Distance:** 15 km loop

**Time:** 2 hours

**Other users:** walkers

From the mouth of Balmacaan Stream, continue up to the saddle with views down to the Rangitata River. Return the same way or pick up the loop track to Lake Camp.

**20 Double Hill via Turtons Saddle to Comyns Hut**

**Grade:** 3

**Distance:** 17.5 km

**Time:** 4–5 hours

**Other users:** trampers, hunters

**Getting there:** From Mount Hutt, turn off SH 77 onto Blackford Road, which becomes the shingled Double Hill Run Road, following up the true right of the Rakaia River.

This track has some poorly defined sections and some areas are steep and rough. Follow the easement, which is marked from Double Hill Run Road. It crosses farm land before heading up the true right of Glenrock Stream. There is a steep climb up to Turtons Saddle before the track drops down to Turtons Stream and wide tussock field views. ‘A’ Frame Hut (3 bunks) provides a good place for morning tea if the weather is closing in. After several stream crossings Comyns Hut (sleeps eight) is reached on the true right.

**21 Lake Heron**

**Grade:** 1

**Distance:** 1.6 km

**Time:** 30 min

**Other users:** vehicles, anglers, walkers

**Getting there:** From Ashburton Gorge Road, turn right onto Hakatere Heron Road to reach the car park at the inlet of Lake Heron.

A 2WD gravel road open to vehicles between November –April follows along the shores of Lake Heron as far as Highbank.

**22 Lake Clearwater**

**Grade:** 2

**Distance:** 1.7 km

**Time:** 30 min

**Other users:** walkers, anglers, 4WD vehicles

**Getting there:** From the end of Ashburton Gorge Road, follow Hakatere Potts Road until you reach the bach settlement of Clearwater, nestled between the two lakes, Camp and Clearwater.

From the campground on the shores of Lake Clearwater, a 4WD vehicle track traverses the lake edge to the right as far as the stream outlet (through the gate—please leave as you find it).

**23 North Opuha Hut**

**Grade:** 2

**Distance:** 7 km

**Time:** 1 hour

**Other users:** trampers, hunters

**Getting there:** From Fairlie follow Clayton Road and then the vehicle track to Fox Peak Ski Field. Vehicles can be left at the DOC car park just before the track crosses North Opuha River.

The easement is well marked and is a pleasant ride along a well-formed track, with wide views to the north and west. The four-bunk North Opuha hut makes a welcome turning point with wide decks on which to enjoy a picnic lunch or bring a sleeping bag for an overnight stay and watch the stars whirl by.
Tenahaun Conservation Area

Mountain-biking is permitted on all public access easements. The first part through the gorge has spectacular scenery but marginal riding—suitable for enthusiasts only.

Getting there: Tenahaun Conservation Area is inland from the South Canterbury town of Mayfield. Contact Raukapuka Area Office for access information.

To reach the Hinds River track, turn onto the Hinds-Gorge Road from Montalto then turn onto Chapmans Road.

24 Rangitata Gorge to track junction
Grade: 4
Distance: 8 km
Time: 2 hours uphill
Other users: walkers, stock

The first part of this trip involves a steep climb up onto a terrace which is then followed through the spectacular Rangitata Gorge. Bikers will find they will need to walk and carry or push their bikes for most of this first section.

25 Track junction to Brown Saddle
Grade: 3–4
Distance: 3 km
Time: 1 hour 30 min uphill
Other users: walkers

A steep, continuous climb up to the saddle, parts of which you may find easier to walk. The reward is some great views of the Rangitata River and flats.

26 Track junction to Moorhouse Stream
Grade: 2
Distance: 1.5 km
Time: 30 min
Other users: walkers

A gentle ride on a 4WD track, which passes by a fenced-off wetland.

27 Track junction to Rangitata River
Grade: 2
Distance: 1 km
Time: 15 min
Other users: walkers, anglers

Follow a 4WD track down to the Rangitata River.

28 Hinds River
Grade: 2
Distance: 2 km
Time: 30 min
Other users: walkers

The easement follows a 4WD track, which makes for good biking. A little bit of gentle climbing to reach the water catchment with attractive vegetation providing a pretty place to stop for lunch.
**Godley/Macaulay area**

The following two trips travel along river valleys north of Lake Tekapo. Both trips require a crossing of the Macaulay River which can be a difficult river to negotiate in periods of high rainfall. Mountain bikers can leave their car at the parking area east of the Macaulay River. For more information refer Godley topomap 136.

**29 Macaulay Hut**

Grade: 2

Distance: 18 km  
Time: 2–3 hours  
Other users: 4WD vehicles, hunters

From the car park it is necessary to cross the Macaulay River and then it is a pleasant ride along the Macaulay River bed and tussock flats to Macaulay Hut. The hut is run by the Mackenzie Alpine Trust and sleeps 14 people. Donations are readily accepted.

**30 Red Stag Hut**

Grade: 2

Distance: 20 km  
Time: 2–3 hours  
Other users: 4WD vehicles, hunters

This trip heads up the Godley River valley. After leaving the car park area and crossing the Macaulay River there is a marked public road access route through Lilybank Station.

The mountain biker continues riding up the valley on river flats. Red Stag Hut sleeps four people and is run by the New Zealand Deer Stalkers Association ($3 p/p). Mountain bikers can continue up the Godley valley as far as Separation Stream.

**Tekapo/Twizel region**

**31 Lake George Scott**

Grade: 2

Distance: 3 km  
Time: 30 minutes  
Other users: walkers

This ride starts 300 m south of the Tekapo Scientific Reserve sign along the Fairlie-Tekapo Road (SH 8, just 3.5 km out of Tekapo). Riders need to lift their bikes over the first locked gate which is approximately 100 m from the highway. Follow the established track until 100 m from the pylons. Take the right fork in the track over another locked gate. Then take the left track down a rocky descent and along the river flats to Lake George Scott—return the same way. Riders need to keep to the established tracks within this reserve area.

**32 Simons Hill**

Grade: 2

Distance: 7 km  
Time: 1 hour  
Other users: walkers, anglers

Simons Hill Conservation Area is located on the eastern side of the main highway between Tekapo and Twizel. There is a well-formed car parking area on the Tekapo side of Simons Pass. A public easement follows Maryburn Stream to Simons Hill Conservation Area. This track is an enjoyable ride for mountain bikers of all ages. The conservation area itself is not suitable for biking.

An energetic day trip would be to cycle to the conservation area and then hike to Simons Hill summit before returning the same way.
**Twizel River Trail**

**Grade:** 2  
**Distance:** 12 km  
**Time:** 1 hour 30 min  
**Other users:** walkers, runners, families, swimmers

A pedestrian gate on the eastern side of SH 8 almost opposite the northern entrance to Twizel township marks the start of Twizel River Trail. It runs for 12 km and overlooks Lake Benmore at the finish. You then have an option of carrying on and returning to Twizel via the gravel Ohau River Road or back-tracking along Twizel River Trail.

The trail is suitable for mountain bikers of all ages. The whole trail takes roughly two hours to cycle out and back, but allow for more time to stop for a swim in the river or admire the views.

Note: dogs and horses not allowed on this track.

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**Ruataniwha Conservation Park**

Ruataniwha Conservation Park covers over 36,000 hectares of high country in the Mackenzie Basin, South Canterbury/North Otago. The closest township is Twizel, SH 8.

Some of the mountain bike rides in the Ruataniwha Conservation Park involve riding over freehold land, using public easements. All tracks are well marked with signage and orange PVC marker poles.

**Please:**  
- stay on the public easement track  
- leave gates as you find them  
- do not disturb stock

For a more detailed map on the rides in Ruataniwha Conservation Park topomaps Ohau G38 and Landsborough G37 are required.

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**Dusky Trail**

**Grade:** 2  
**Distance:** 23 km loop  
**Time:** 3–4 hours  
**River crossing**  
**Other users:** walkers, horse riders

**Access**

There are two entrances to Dusky Trail. One starting point is located on Aoraki/Mt Cook Road (SH 80), about 4 km from the SH 8 turn-off. There is a designated car parking area here.

The second entry point—and the closest to Twizel—is at Fraser Stream. Look out for the Department of Conservation sign for Dusky Trail.
After crossing the stream the track meanders along tussock terraces out to Fraser Stream. From here riders can take the shorter track back to the Pukaki Canal car park alongside Fraser Stream. Otherwise the track continues through farmland and across several streams. It carries on past Waterwheel Wetlands and onto a short section of gravel road back to the start. Alternatively, this ride can be ridden in the opposite direction for a technical descent from Pyramid Saddle.

### Parsons MTB Track

**Grade:** 3  
**Distance:** 8 km loop  
**Time:** 2 hour loop  
**Other users:** walkers, horse riders

Getting there: Off SH 8, 13 km south of Twizel, turn on to Lake Ohau Road. Follow road until beginning of Ohau Ski field Road. Circuit begins from here.

A great family ride along Ohau Skifield Rd, then single track (after ford crossing) heading south to Sawyers Stream. Turn left on a downhill 4WD track to Glen Mary Ski Club Huts and return on the main road. Or for a challenge take the shortcut ‘Knee Trembler Drop Track’ (Grade 4).

### Baikie Hut

This hut can be visited as a side trip from the main Dusky Trail. From the Twizel River crossing, it is 4 km to Baikie Hut (4 bunks), a great venue for picnicking or an overnight stay. This hut has been substantially renovated. The original hut was built during the 1920s as part of the Dusky Run block. The trail derives its name from this connection.

**Grade:** 2

**Distance:** 9 km  
**Time:** 1 hour  
**Other users:** 4WD vehicles, horse riders, walkers

From the designated car park area beside Aoraki Mt Cook Road, (2.5 km from SH 8 turn-off) mountain bikers can ride on a farm track which climbs through exotic forest and then descends on to river flats and runs alongside the Twizel River. This track climbs vertically 200 m over a distance of 9 km up to Baikie Hut (4 bunks) where mountain bikers can picnic or alternatively, stay the night. Baikie hut is a basic facility so it is free to all users.

### Darts Bush Stream

**Grade:** 2

**Distance:** 21 km loop  
**Time:** 2.5 hours Stream crossings  
**Other users:** walkers, horse riders

This ride starts at the car park area, signposted off Pukaki Canal Road (200 m past the Dusky Trail start).

An information kiosk is situated in the car park. The track travels past Ben Ohau Wetlands and through plantation forests. There is a steep climb up to Pyramid Saddle with a gentle descent across the flats out to Darts Bush Stream.
Monument Hut

**Grade:** 2  
**Distance:** 9 km  
**Time:** 1 hour  
**Other users:** 4WD vehicles, hunters, trampers

Off SH 8, 13 km south of Twizel, turn on to Lake Ohau Rd. By carrying on around Lake Ohau the mountain biker will eventually reach the Hopkins River valley. There is a car park area opposite Huxley Lodge at Ram Hill. The first part of the track is well formed but it becomes progressively more rugged as the biker gets closer to Monument Hut. This is a great day trip or alternatively you can stay overnight (hut fees apply—1 ticket/night). It is possible to mountain bike further up the Hopkins valley but the biker will encounter many river crossings so care is needed.

**Ahuriri Conservation Park**

Ahuriri Conservation Park protects 49,000 hectares of high country in the Mackenzie Basin, North Otago. The closest township is Omarama, 28 km on SH 8.

Ahuriri Conservation Park is reached via SH 8, south of Omarama. It is a very long river valley and entails a 20-km drive, suitable for all vehicles, up to the Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary. After this point the road to the car park, just before Canyon Creek, is recommended for 4WD vehicles. From here mountain bikers can easily access the upper valley area for day trips or overnight excursions.

Shamrock Hut

**Grade:** 2  
**Distance:** 5 km  
**Time:** 1 hour  
**Other users:** walkers, horse riders

This is an established track through tussock land; cross Canyon Creek and head into the upper Ahuriri Valley. Shamrock Hut (below) sleeps two people and donations are appreciated (there is a donation box). There are also plenty of opportunities for camping enroute to Shamrock Hut or around the hut itself.

Hagens Hut

**Grade:** 2  
**Distance:** total 11 km—6 km from Shamrock Hut  
**Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes  
**Other users:** walkers, horse riders

Hagens Hut is accessible to mountain bikers, although reaching this hut does require crossing Ahuriri River twice. The track into the upper valley is well marked to Hagens Hut (4 bunks). It is also possible to mountain bike a further 14 km up the Ahuriri Valley to Top Hut (2 bunks) but the track becomes rough river-bed terrain.

For more detailed information refer Haast topomap G38.
**Omarama surrounds**

**Wairepo Kettleholes**

- Grade: 2
- Distance: 3.5 km to the kettleholes
- Time: 1 hour
- Other users: walkers

The entry point to the Wairepo Kettleholes is 14 km along Quailburn Road and is well signposted (Quailburn Road starts approximately four kilometres north of Omarama township off SH 8). There is ample room for off-road parking. The track follows an old 4WD track and is an easement through private farmland. A stile leads over into the conservation area and from here it is a short distance to the kettleholes.

**Otamatakou Scenic Reserve**

- Grade: 2
- Distance: 5 km
- Time: 1 hour
- Other users: walkers

The track leading to Otamatakou Scenic Reserve is located off the Otematata Road beside Lake Benmore. The first part of this trip travels along an easement through private farmland. This easement is well signposted and marked by orange poles. There is a gradual uphill climb along a 4WD road through farm paddocks to reach the Otamatakou Scenic Reserve. This 650-ha area contains an extensive remnant shrub community that has escaped human intervention and is a botanist’s paradise.

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**For more information**

Waimakariri Area Office
15 Albert Street,
Rangiora 7400
waimakariri@doc.govt.nz
03 313 0820

Arthur’s Pass National Park Visitor Centre (open 7 days)
Main Road,
Arthur’s Pass
arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz
03 318 9211

Raukapuka Area Office
North Terrace,
Geraldine
03 693 1010

Twizel Te Manahuna Area Office
Wairepo Road,
Twizel
03 435 0802

Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park Visitor Centre (open 7 days)
1 Larch Grove,
Aoraki/Mt Cook
mtcookvc@doc.govt.nz
03 435 1186

Canterbury Conservancy
Private Bag 4715
Christchurch
canterburyco@doc.govt.nz
03 379 9758

www.doc.govt.nz

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**Didymo**

Help us prevent the spread of didymo; please Clean, Check, Dry your footwear, bike and tyres after doing any trip that involves river crossings. For more information about how to decontaminate your gear, go to www.biosecurity.govt.nz/didymo