

# Discover the Lindis region

Things to see and do from Omarama to Lindis Valley

SOUTH CANTERBURY/NORTH OTAGO



## Track classifications



### Tramping tracks

Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking. Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections.

Suitable for people with good fitness. Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills required.

### Mountain bike tracks



**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 with 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 difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.



**Grade 5:** Technically challenging. Giant climbs, narrow track and numerous hazards including dangerous drop-offs, sharp corners and difficult obstacles. Expect walking and possibly bike carrying.

### Key to symbols



Car park



Toilets



Camp site



Historic site



Good views



Dogs allowed



No dogs

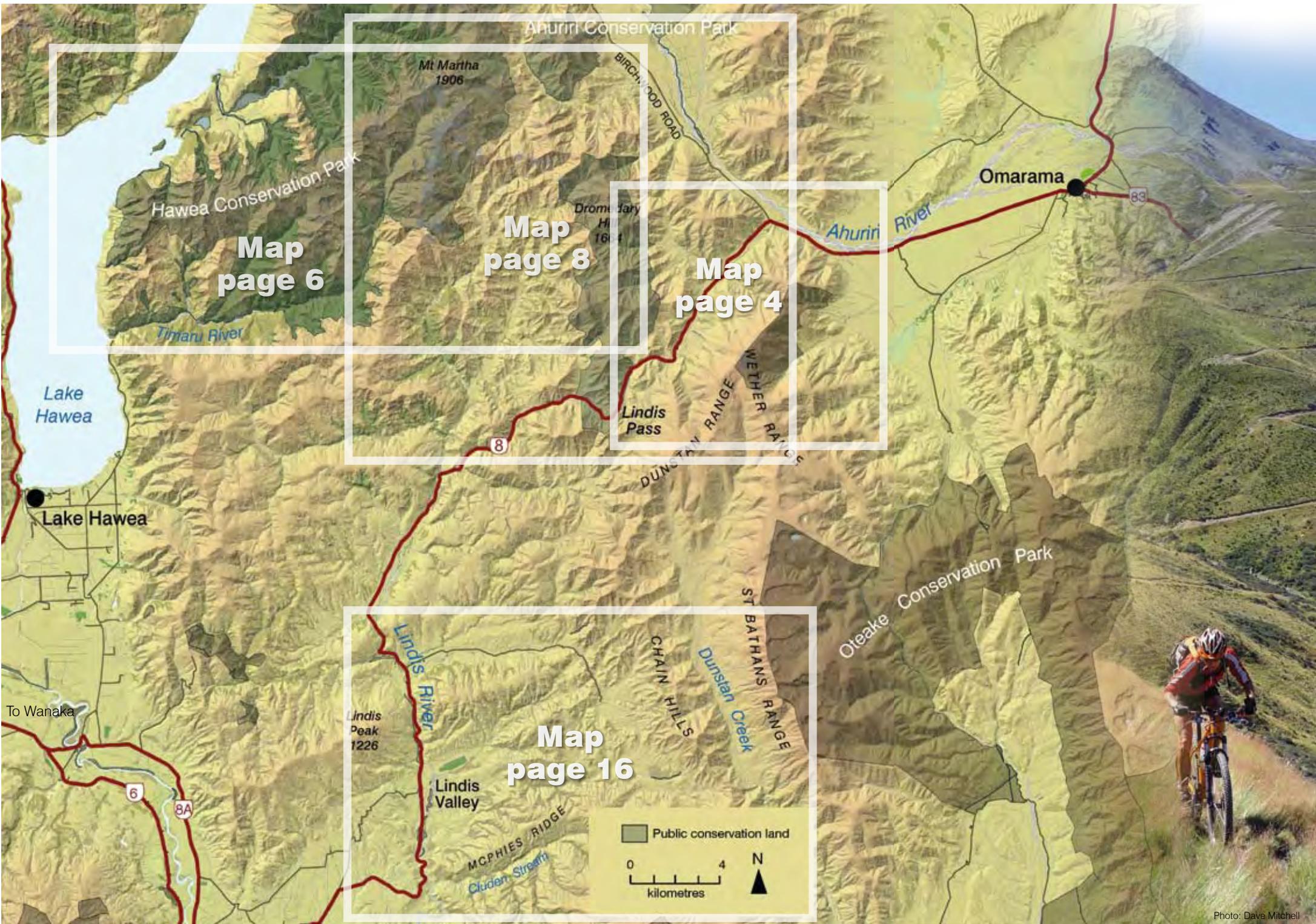


No fires

All map backgrounds by Geographx  
Cover cycling image: Dave Mitchell

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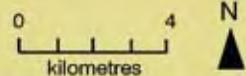
Map  
page 6

Map  
page 8

Map  
page 4

Map  
page 16

Public conservation land





The Lindis Pass area is New Zealand's best known tussock landscape and provides a stunning visual backdrop for motorists and cyclists travelling along State Highway 8 (S H 8). Recreational opportunities here have grown over recent years, from short walks to challenging mountain biking and tramping trips on public conservation land. The tracks leading off S H 8 are described in sequence for people heading south.

## What to take

Groups and individuals heading out on day and overnight trips need to plan properly and be well equipped. The 1:50,000 NZTopo50 maps CA14 Lindis and CB14 Dunstan Peak are recommended. The maps supplied in this brochure are only guides and not suitable for navigation use.

In summer, very hot and dry conditions are common. Make sure you carry plenty of water and have adequate protection against the sun. Alpine conditions may be experienced at any time of the year, and the higher country is subject to snow and ice during winter months. Ensure you carry warm and waterproof clothing and wear sturdy boots. Be prepared.

## Public access easements

Many of the recreational opportunities involve using public access easements crossing through working high-country stations. Always respect the landowner's livestock and property; stay on the marked track until you reach conservation land, leave gates as you find them and use stiles where provided. Camping is permitted only on conservation land.



Paraerae (sandals)  
Courtesy Canterbury Museum

## Māori greenstone trail

In the late nineteenth century during summer and autumn, Māori from the east coast of the South Island travelled through the high country and across passes to the West Coast in small parties to collect greenstone/pounamu. The Māori trail, Tahu-a-arapaoa, went from the Waitaki valley to the West Coast and went over Lindis Pass to Lake Hawea.

# I Spy

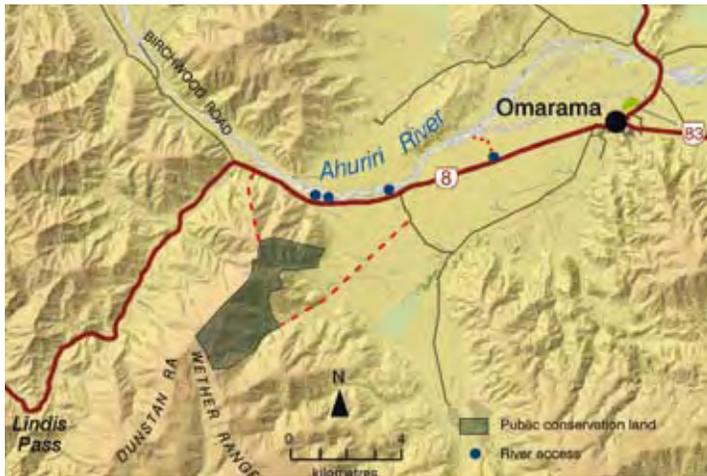
As you travel through the Lindis area from north to south you will need a **few stops** to complete this quest —

look for clues throughout this booklet to discover . . .

The name of a road-maker  
from the 1860s

Clue numbers – fill in the spaces

— — — — —  
4 1 7 8 3 5 2 6



## Ahuriri River access

Travelling on S H 8 south of Omarama there are four different access tracks to Ahuriri River. These are signposted on the right-hand side of the highway with car parking space available.



## Wether Range track

Tramping track 7 km



On the left-hand side of S H 8 approximately 15 km south of Omarama is a marked public access easement which rises steeply from the road to the Wether Range tops.

## Ahuriri valley access

### Birchwood Road

Birchwood Road is located 17 km south of Omarama with the lower valley giving access to Lindis Conservation Area and onto numerous mountain-biking and walking tracks. The upper valley gives access to Ahuriri Conservation Park; beyond the homestead a 4WD vehicle is required.



## Avon Burn *(map page 9)*

Car park – Tin Hut (private)  
3–4 hours, 9 km



Mountain bike 1–2 hours, Grade 2



Approximately 11 km along Birchwood Road is a car park area on the left hand side, for Avon Burn access. The track initially follows a fence line, crosses the Avon Burn and climbs alongside the Avon Burn gorge. An established track leads to grassy flats near Tin Hut (private) – a great spot for a picnic before returning the same way.

## Mt Martha – Timaru River Track *(map page 7)*

Tin Hut – Mt Martha Saddle 4–6 hours



Mt Martha Saddle – Top Timaru Hut 2 hours



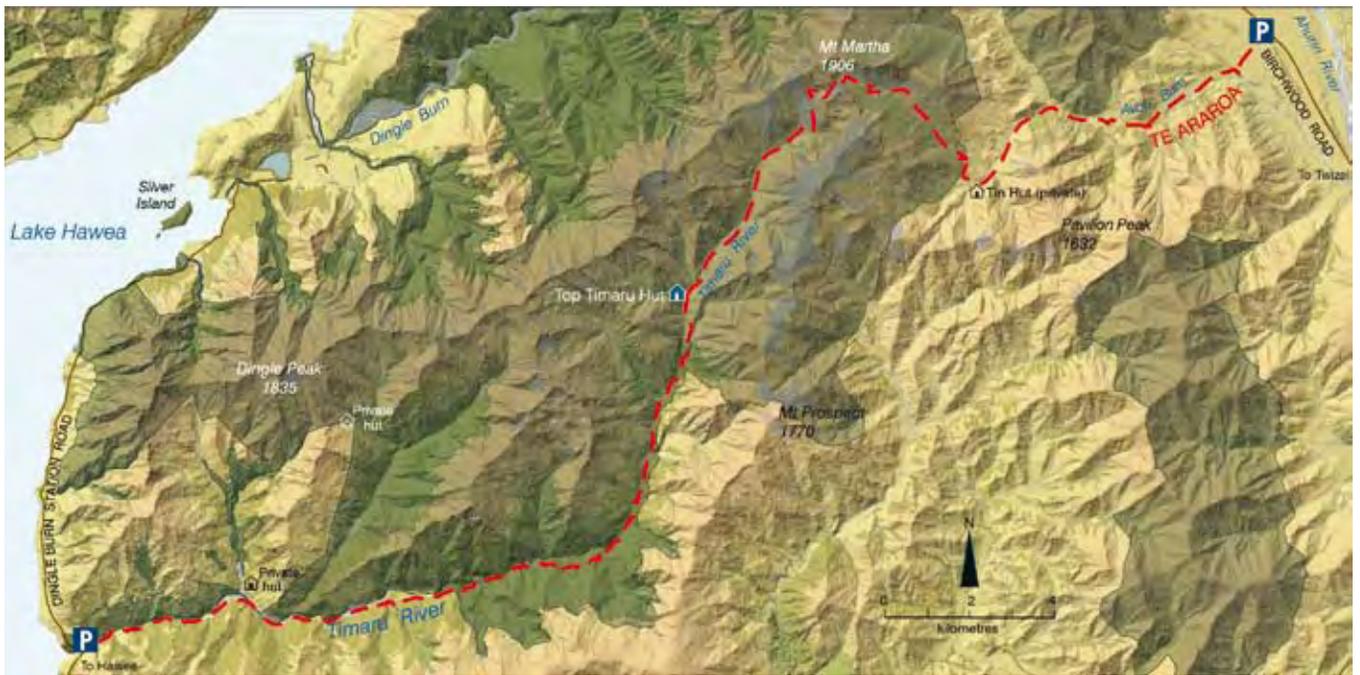
Top Timaru Hut – Lake Hawea 10–11 hours



Signposted shortly after passing Tin Hut, the track climbs directly to Mt Martha Saddle (1680 m) within Ahuriri Conservation Park and then descends to the head of Timaru valley and onto Top Timaru Hut in the Hawea Conservation Park. From the hut a marked (not poled) track follows Timaru River to its outlet in Lake Hawea. This last segment is a long tramp with several river crossings and steep sidles on the track requiring care. There are also sections that are rugged and uneven.

*A new route from Timaru River Track to Lake Hawea via Breast Hill is to be constructed in summer of 2010/2011. Please check at a local visitor centre for more information.*

The track from Ahuriri valley to Lake Hawea is part of Tea Araroa – a walking trail from Cape Reinga to Bluff, [www.teararoa.org.nz](http://www.teararoa.org.nz). **You will need backcountry experience, river crossing and navigational skills for this section of trail.**



## Melina Ridge Track *(map page 8)*

Ahuriri valley – S H 8 8–10 hours, 35 km



Mountain bike 6–8 hours, Grade 5



A big outing for extreme mountain bikers, this track steadily climbs from the Avon Burn towards Mt Melina in Hawea Conservation Park, reaching an elevation of 1600 m. Following a zig-zag descent into Lindis River, the track continues onto Smith Creek before emerging at the S H 8 car park on the Otago side of Lindis Pass. Two vehicles may be required for this trip; otherwise it is a 28-km ride back to the Birchwood Road car park in Ahuriri valley.

Photo: Dave Mitchell



## Dalrachney Road bridge, S H 8 access

### Dromedary Hill *(map page 9)*



S H 8 car park – Dromedary Hill summit  
6–8 hours return, 10 km



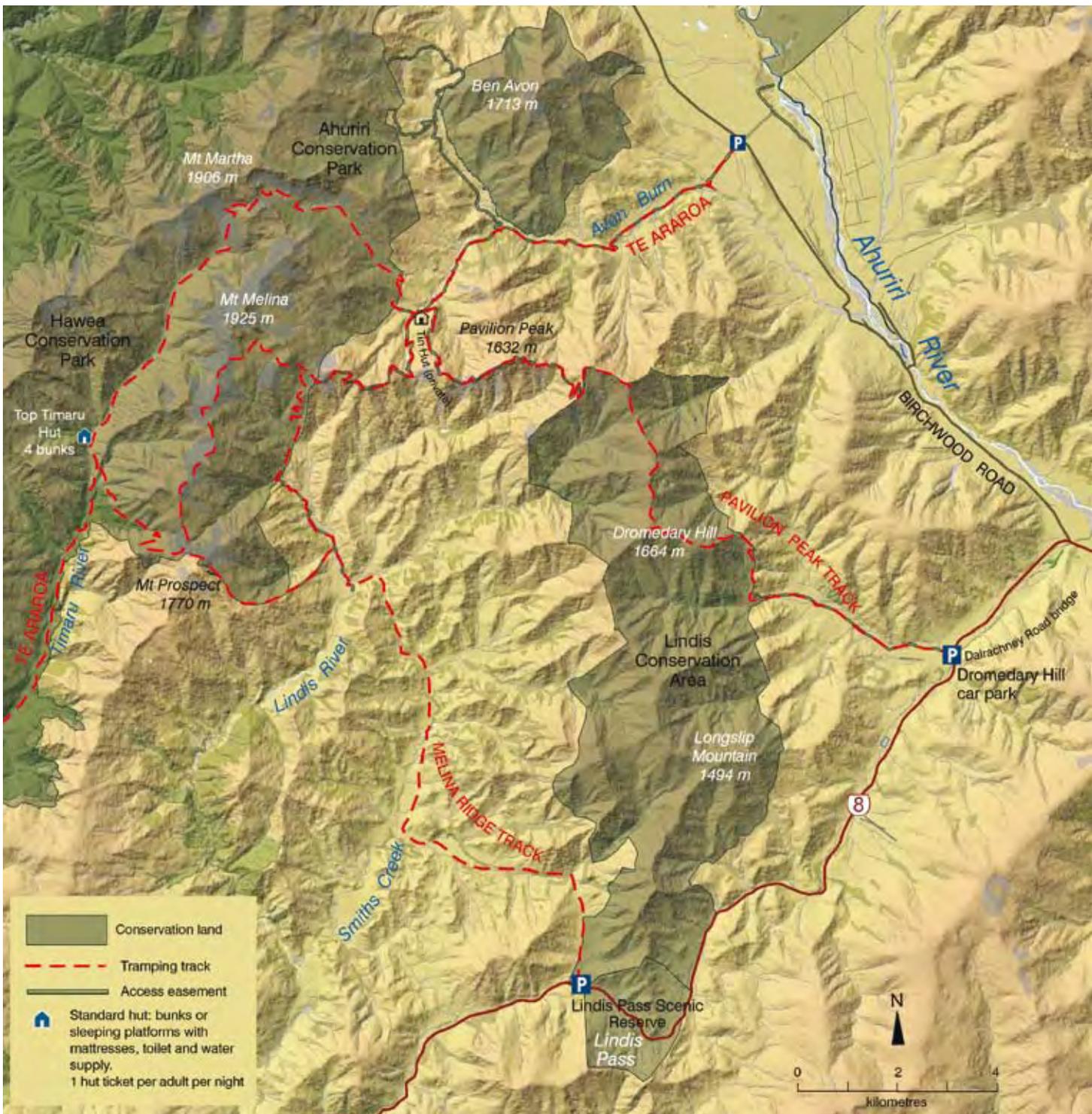
Mountain bike 2 hours 30 min–4 hours return, Grade 5

A signposted car park near Dalrachney Road bridge denotes the start of the track to Dromedary Hill (1664 m) in Lindis Conservation Area. This trip makes a great day-walk or half-day mountain-bike ride. The views on the ascent are spectacular, with Mt Barth in Ahuriri Conservation Park clearly visible on a good day.

## I Spy

By stopping at the Dromedary Hill car park you will see a word on the DOC sign that means ‘taking care of’ — the 1st letter of that word is **clue 1**; the 6th letter is **clue 2** and the 9th letter is **clue 3**





## Pavilion Peak Track (map page 9)

S H 8 car park – Avon Burn car park

8–10 hours, 32 km

### Mountain bike Grade 5

This track is a continuation of the Dromedary Hill ascent previously mentioned. The track undulates along the mountain tops within Lindis Conservation Area and then descends to a saddle under Pavilion Peak. It is a steep climb up Pavilion Peak (bike pushing may be required) and mountain-bike riders need to be careful on the descent down to Avon Burn. From the river flats it is a pleasant ride out to Birchwood Road car park in the Ahuriri valley.



EXPERT

Spotted skink Photo: A Spencer

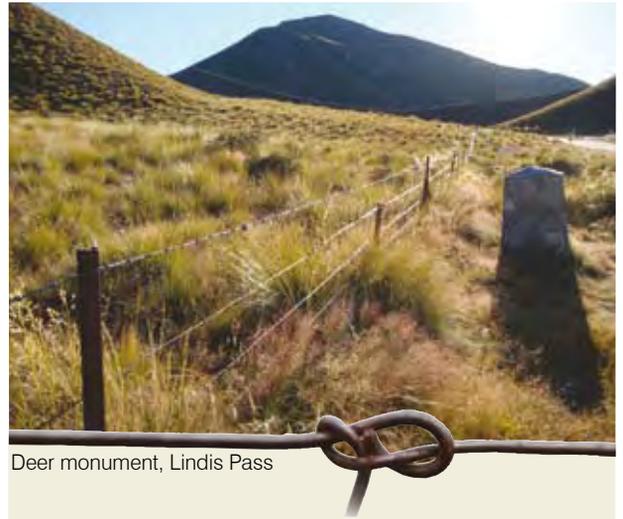
Pipit/pīhoihoi  
Copyright Nga Manu Images



### Small creatures abound in Lindis Conservation Area

The high alpine ridges, rock bluffs, scree faces and snow-tussock grasslands host the New Zealand falcon/kārearea, New Zealand pipit/pīhoihoi and spotted skink while lower altitude shrublands and beech forests provide habitat for fantail/pīwakawaka, grey warbler/riroriro and rifleman/tītīpounamu. Butterflies, grasshoppers, dragonflies and spiders exist within the vegetation, along with various skinks and geckos.

Two species of native fish, the kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) and the upland bully (*Gobiomorphus breviceps*) rely on the high-country streams.



Deer monument, Lindis Pass

## Roadside points of interest

### Lindis Pass Road Reserve – boundary fence

From Dalrachney Road bridge, some of the fencing that runs parallel to S H 8 as you drive through to Lindis Pass is very old. Iron posts manufactured in England provide an interesting contrast to the wooden fencing materials used today.

### Fencing was a breakthrough in early farming

To stop sheep from wandering from one run to the next, many runholders employed 'boundary keepers' – men who would spend months working in isolation and living in a small stone or cob cottages. From around 1880 fencing slowly replaced boundary keepers in this region. With only bullock wagons and mules to transport the wire and fence posts, fencing these isolated runs was an extremely difficult and costly job.



## Lindis Pass Scenic Reserve

This reserve, formed in 1976, was one of the first tussock reserves in New Zealand and is well known for its landscape and photographic values. It contains snow tussock (*Chionochloa rigida* and *C. macra*) with fescue tussock (*Festuca novae-zelandiae*) in places while red tussocks (*Chionochloa rubra*) and silver tussocks/wī (*Poa cita*) occupy moist areas.



### Tussocks benefit from volunteer hours

It is easy to take the sweeping tussock vista for granted but many volunteer hours are spent removing invasive weeds that, if left unchecked, would see the tussock region changed.

Thanks to the efforts of the Lindis Conservation Group, who work hard to remove brier/rosehip, scotch broom, Russell lupins and thistles, the Lindis Pass Scenic Reserve is relatively weed free. This group has carried out skink monitoring and maintains a record of flora and fauna species observed.

To retain the reserve's natural beauty removal of rubbish is also necessary.

## Lindis Pass 971 m



The northern side of Lindis Pass is a popular motorist stop and a great opportunity to appreciate the widespread tussock landscape protected as a scenic reserve. The monument here commemorates the liberation of red deer in Otago. If you have the time it is also an opportunity to look at some more unique fence posts up close.

The first European to traverse the pass was Otago surveyor, John Turnbull Thomson, in 1857. He named it after his home Lindisfarne Island in north-east England.

### I Spy

Your next clues are on the deer monument itself. A word that means 'to celebrate' has three letters the same in it, this letter is **clue 4**. This word means 100 years, its last letter is **clue 5**.



## Lindis Conservation Area from S H 8

After a short descent of 2 km from the pass, a sign on the right-hand side of S H 8 indicates the Lindis Conservation Area and the start of the Melina Ridge and Mt Prospect tracks.

### Melina Ridge Track (map page 9)



35 km

### Mountain bike 8–10 hours



For a short 3-km walk or bike, follow the marked track through to Smith Creek before climbing up and over to emerge at the Lindis River. To continue on the ridge track, cross the Lindis River and follow a marked track that precedes a steep zigzag climb towards Mount Melina before descending onto an established farm track. Travel alongside the Avon Burn to the Birchwood Road car park.

### Mt Prospect (map page 8)



20 km

### Mountain bike 6–8 hours



From the Lindis River follow the sign-posted 4WD track to Mt Prospect. Multi-day trampers can descend the

1770-m summit and continue up and over into the Timaru valley (a further 6 km) where the track meets a section of Te Araroa crossing from the Ahuriri valley to Lake Hawea (see page 5 for Timaru River Track).

## I Spy

If you stop to look at the Lindis Conservation Area where Melina Ridge Track starts you will see a greeting Track starts you will see a greeting word on the DOC sign that contains two vowels, both the same, this letter is **clue 6**.



### Lindis gold rush

Despite a few early reports of gold in the area, little notice was taken until 1861 when the Lindis River became the scene of a small, short-lived 'gold rush'. News of the diggings soon spread and by April an estimated 300 miners were present, although a report in July noted that the Lindis was deserted. The Lindis rush failed for a number of reasons including isolation, extreme climate, expensive provisions and doubt. Ultimately, the remoteness of the area at the time was the deciding factor for the miners. They packed up their shovels and moved on.

## Lindis Valley



### Shirlmar Track *(map page 17)*

2–2 hours 30 min, 9 km



### Long Acre Track

1 hour 30 min–2 hours, 7 km



### Chain Hills Track

1–1 hour 30 min, 5 km



### McPhies Ridge Track

6–7 hours 30 min, 25 km



There are a number of tracks in the Lindis Valley available for public recreation. Most of these follow 4WD roads and farm tracks and are, therefore, suitable for any reasonably fit mountain bikers, walkers or runners. Good hill climbs and a range of possible circuits can be enjoyed. As most of the surrounding farmland is privately owned – not public conservation land – ensure you keep to the marked tracks.

*Note: Pleasant Valley car park and the public access tracks extending from here are closed to all public use for lambing from 10 October – 5 December.*

### Lindis Peak Track *(map page 16)*



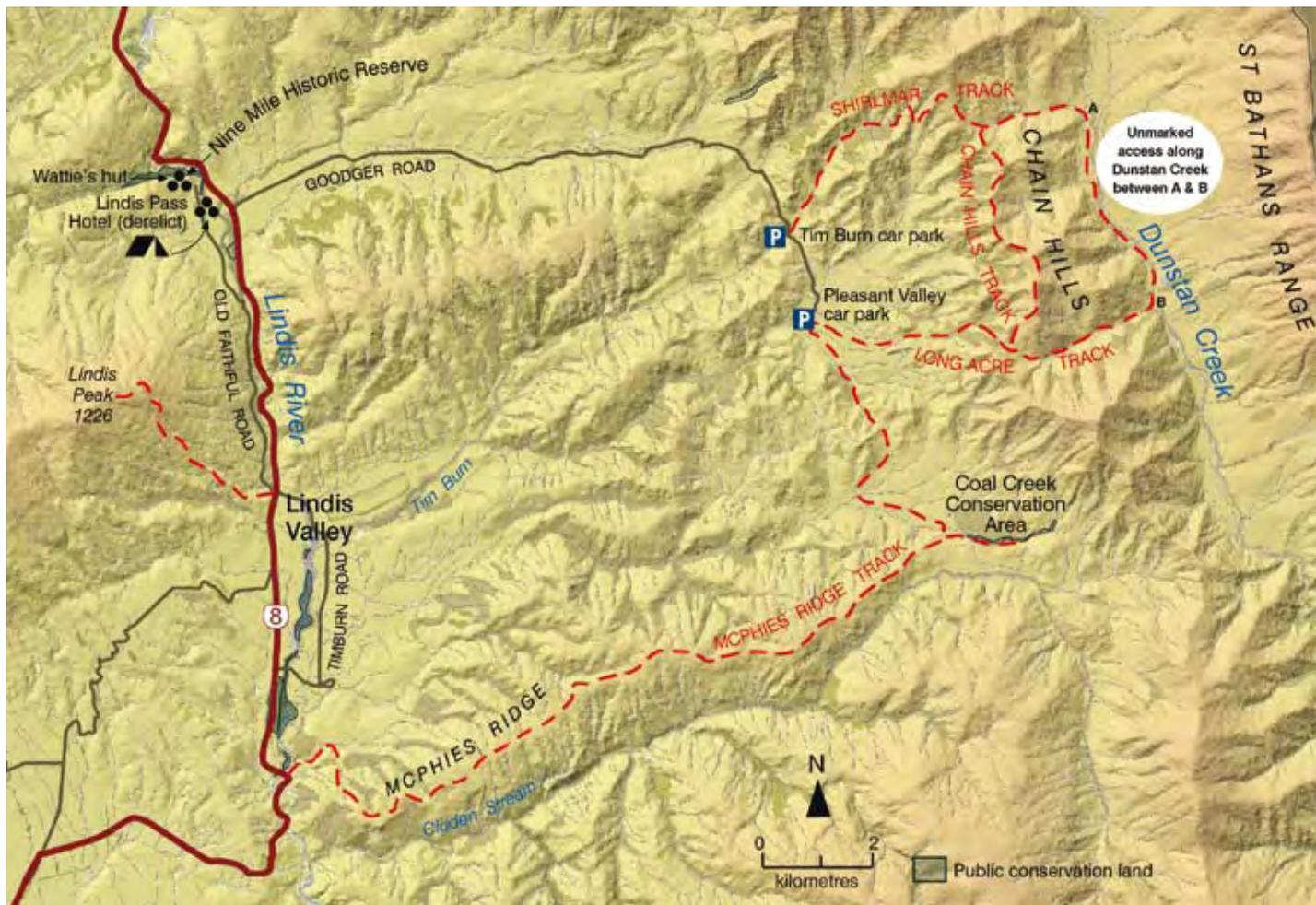
3 hours one way, 6 km



Access to the track is signposted at the start of Old Faithful Road. The view from the summit (1226 m) is one of the most extensive in Central Otago with a vista including the stunning St Bathans Range to the east and numerous peaks of the Main Divide. *This is a public access easement and is closed for lambing 10 October – 5 December.*

## I Spy

The name of this peak has the last two letters you require; the vowel is **clue 7**, while a consonant is **clue 8**. By visiting the historic Lindis Pass Hotel and reading the information panels there you will be able learn what took place at the Lindis River because of this prominent road-maker.



### The last alluvial miner

The last miner to work in the area was 'Wattie' Thompson, who lived in a self-built concrete hut near the old Lindis River bridge. After returning from WWII, Wattie toiled in nearby Camp Creek searching for gold. In 1971 a sudden flood swept down the creek, depositing "great quantities of stone and gravel", burying the creek bed Wattie had cleared. Too dispirited to start again, he moved on. The remains of his hut (right), near Lindis Pass Hotel, are worth a visit.



## Nine Mile Historic Reserve

Access from Old Faithful Road; S H 8 opposite Timburn Road. This historic reserve is steeped in heritage and includes the remarkable ruins of the Lindis Pass Hotel. Assist the Department of Conservation in protecting the historic significance of the area by not removing any historical artefacts from the reserve.



Lindis Pass Hotel ca 1890s Photo courtesy of the Lucas family



## For your safety

**River crossing:** Treat all rivers and streams with respect. Be aware of recent weather conditions. Do not attempt to cross swollen rivers or streams.

**Fire:** Fire restrictions apply to all public conservation land. Check with local information centres or DOC for the current fire status.

**Communications:** Cell phone coverage cannot be relied upon in this region. The use of satellite phones, mountain radios or personal locator beacons can all provide increased personal safety.



NEW ZEALAND  
environmental  
CARE CODE

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

Toitu te whenua  
(Leave the land  
undisturbed)



### Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests.

Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.



## More information

More detailed information on Oteake Conservation Park, Ahuriri Conservation Park and Hawea Conservation Park is covered in separate DOC brochures.

### Department of Conservation

Twizel *Te Manahuna* Area Office  
Wairepo Road  
Private Bag, TWIZEL  
Phone: 03 435 0802  
Email: [TwizelAO@doc.govt.nz](mailto:TwizelAO@doc.govt.nz)



### Department of Conservation

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For further information about recreation activities and conservation visit: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Suggestions for corrections or improvements should be emailed to: [recreation@doc.govt.nz](mailto:recreation@doc.govt.nz)