

HUTT RIVER TRAIL

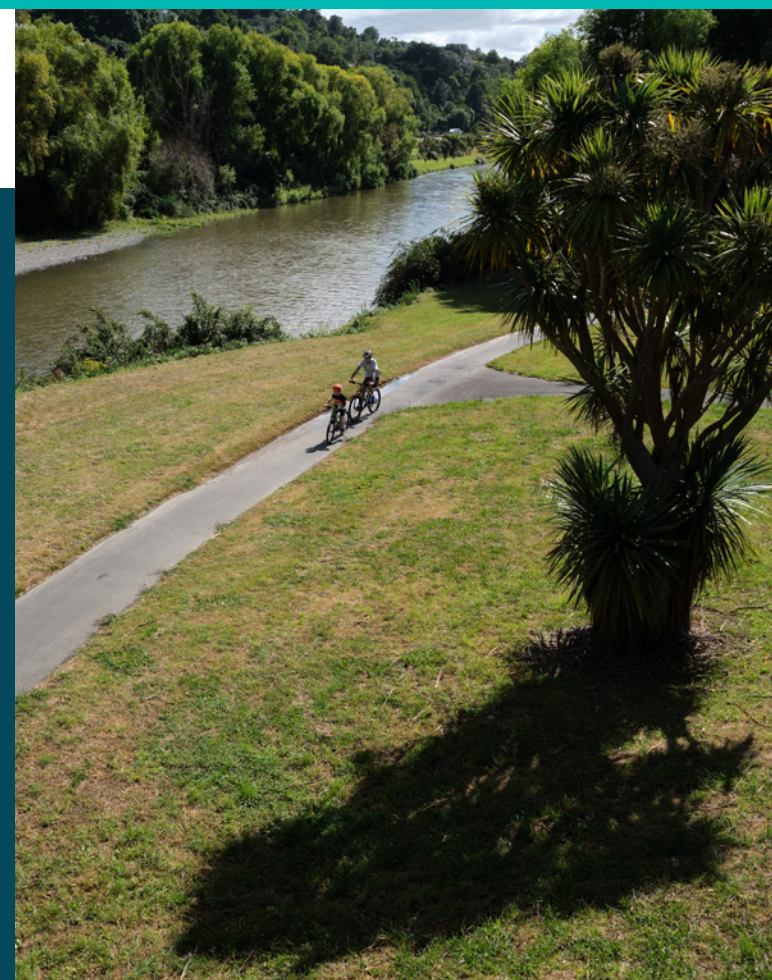


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From valley to sea

Running alongside Te Awakairangi / Hutt River from Hikoikoi Reserve, Petone to Birchville, Upper Hutt, the 29km Hutt River Trail is an easy scenic walk and cycle path. It also allows access to the river for swimming, fishing and kayaking.

The Trail runs the entire length of the eastern river bank. There are trails on all but two sections of the western side to provide shorter loops between bridges.

The Hutt River Trail will eventually run as far as the Te Marua area of Kaitoke Regional Park to link with the Remutaka Rail Trail.

History

The Hutt Valley's powerful river, shaped by two million years of geological activity, flows from the Tararua Ranges to the Petone foreshore.

Occupied since at least 1200 AD by the Ngāti Tara, the river was named Te Awa Kairangi, meaning "the highly esteemed river," for its value as a transport route and food source.

European settlers arriving in 1839-40, were welcomed by Te Ati Awa who had established settlements at Hikoikoi, Owahiti, Pito-one, and Waiwhetu.

The river's vegetation included pīngao, raupō, harakeke, and diverse forest types. The 1855 earthquake elevated the valley, rendering the previously navigable river impassable. Although the valley could now be extensively settled, several devastating floods slowed the population growth.

Flood control efforts began in the 1890s, and much native vegetation was replaced by pasture and houses.

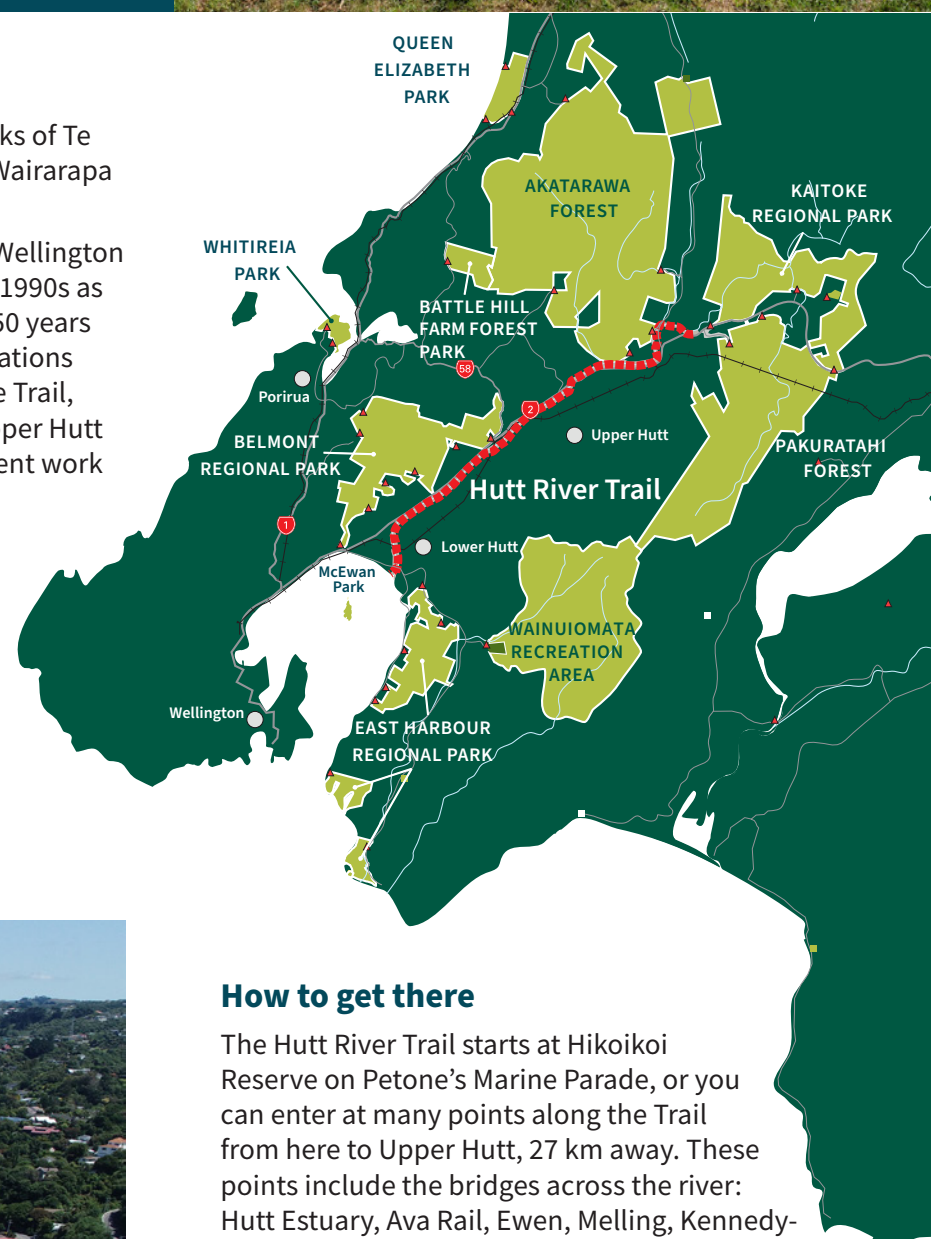
Today, Greater Wellington manages flood risks to protect the valley's residential and commercial areas.

About the Trail

In the early days foot tracks along the banks of Te Awakairangi / Hutt River extended to the Wairarapa over Remutaka Hill.

The Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs and Greater Wellington developed the idea of the Trail during the 1990s as a reminder of these tracks and recognise 50 years of Rotary in the Hutt Valley. These organisations have signposted, surfaced and marked the Trail, with assistance from Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, service groups and government work schemes.

Most of the Trail has a gravel surface although some down-river sections have been sealed. Some parts are narrow and may be affected by high water flow, particularly the Taita Gorge, near Silverstream.



How to get there

The Hutt River Trail starts at Hikoikoi Reserve on Petone's Marine Parade, or you can enter at many points along the Trail from here to Upper Hutt, 27 km away. These points include the bridges across the river: Hutt Estuary, Ava Rail, Ewen, Melling, Kennedy-Good, Silverstream, Moonshine, Totara Park, Harcourt Park and Birchville Bridges.

The Ava, Melling, Pomare, Manor Park and Silverstream Railway Stations are handy to the Trail, together with various bus services.

Visit www.metlink.org.nz for train and bus timetables.



Walking, running and cycling

In many areas tracks are located on both sides of Te Awakairangi / Hutt River offering a range of short loops. You can also walk or cycle the Trail by entering and leaving at many points.

The following guide describes individual sections and gives approximate walking times.

Distance (km)	Time (walk)	Description
Petone to Ava		
2.5km	1.5hrs return	Once the site of a stockaded Ngāti Awa village, Hikoikoi Reserve is reached from Petone's Marine Parade. As you pass the mud flats and boat sheds to the Estuary Bridge and cross the river you will see the large pipe on the bridge that carries water from Wainuiomata to supply Wellington City. Continue to the Ava Rail Bridge and re-cross the river using the footpath beside the railway line.
Ava to Melling		
2.5km each way	1.5hrs return	Land skirmishes in the 1840s-50s saw Fort Richmond established in 1845 near the site of this bridge. Now one of the most urban parts of the Trail, this section is a very popular walk and cycle route. Ewen Bridge, near the centre of this section, offers a shorter loop or figure-of-eight alternative.
Melling to Avalon		
2.5km each way	1.5hrs return	On the site of the substation was once Maraenuku Pa. At Harcourt Werry Drive you can either rejoin the stopbank at Kennedy Good Bridge, or visit the Avalon Park with its playground and boating pond. Across the bridge, near Belmont School, is the historic site of Motutara Pa and later the Belmont Railway Station.
Avalon to Silverstream		
8km	2hrs one way	There is a good swimming hole just north of Fraser Park and the Silverstream area of the Trail is very popular for dog walking and picnics. Once under the Pomare rail bridge and into the confines of Taita Gorge, the Manor Park Golf Course can be seen across the river. On this side the former willow tree nursery extends to the Silverstream bridges. It is a 1 km walk or cycle from the Silverstream bridges to the Silverstream Railway Station.
Silverstream to Moonshine		
4km each way	2hrs return	<p>The eastern Trail is very popular with scenic views over the river and Wellington Golf Course providing a buffer between the Trail and local suburbs. Fly fishers get the best access from the service road on the eastern bank.</p> <p>Bartons Bush in Trentham Memorial Park is the only remaining example of river terrace forest in the region, and offers playgrounds and bush walks that link with the Trail.</p>
Moonshine to Totara Park		
4km	1hr one way	<p>Upstream from Moonshine Bridge, large trees shade pleasant picnic spots at Poets Park. This part of the river was a film site for The Great River Anduin in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Turn off River Road (SH2) to reach the Trail. It follows service tracks along the eastern riverbank to Totara Park Bridge.</p> <p>There is a good swimming hole downstream from the confluence of the Whakatikei River. The rapids upstream are a popular challenge for kayakers.</p>
Totara Park to Birchville		
2.5km each way	1.5hrs return	The open parklands, remnant trees and rocky outcrops in this area are a natural highlight of the Trail. The abutments of the historic swingbridge at Maoribank corner are still visible and there is good swimming in this part of the river. Harcourt Park is a scenic backdrop to an adventure playground, motor camp and outdoor stage. Popular with Lord of the Rings fans, it was the film site of Isengard, the ancient Gondorian fortress. Here you can either cross the footbridge and continue upstream along the west bank or follow Akatarawa Road to Birchville. Near the confluence of the Hutt and Akatarawa Rivers there are popular swimming holes, car parks and river rafting access.
Birchville to Te Marua and Kaitoke Regional Park		
		<p>The Trail continues under the Birchville bridges and takes on a more rural aspect with views over the river to farmland and bush. Passing through two stands of remnant kahikatea, totara and beech it reaches SH2 just north of the intersection with Topaz Street. Return to the bridges the same way or via Topaz Street and Gemstone Drive.</p> <p>Beyond Te Marua are other tracks leading through Kaitoke Regional Park and the SH2 underpass to Tunnel Gully and the Remutaka Rail Trail, which links to the Wairarapa.</p>



Caring for the Hutt River Trail

- Dogs are allowed on the Trail but must be under control and on leads where signs state. Please remove droppings.
- Use the rubbish bins provided or take your litter home.
- Horse riding is permitted on formed service roads. Keep off the grassed river berm, stopbanks and pedestrian trails.
- Mountain biking is allowed on all sections of the Trail. Always wear a helmet, show consideration for other Trail users and observe the mountain bike code.
- Picnic tables and barbecue sites are often situated near swimming holes. Gas barbecues are permitted. Light no fires except with the ranger's permission.
- Te Awakairangi / Hutt River is an excellent trout fishery. Salt-water fishing is popular on and below the Hutt Estuary Bridge. You must have a fishing licence (available from local sports retailers).
- Wear a helmet and flotation vest.
- Motor vehicles are permitted only on formed roads. Slow down and give way to other users. Keep off the grassed river berm, stopbanks and pedestrian trails.
- No trail bikes, ATV quads or trikes are permitted on the Hutt River Trail.