

TIMBER TRAIL PUREORA



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Stunning virgin and regenerating native bush and rare birdlife**
- **Mt Pureoras' mysterious cloud forest and secret views**
- **Incredible history spanning Māori lore, native milling, conservation fights and today's conservation successes**
- **Varied terrain across single track, gravel roads and old bush logging tramways**
- **Incredible bridges including eight suspension bridges**

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Opened in 2013, the purpose-built Timber Trail celebrates the heritage and the passion of New Zealanders for this special part of the King Country.

Local Māori knew this mountainous area as Te Pureoraō- Kahu, the place where Kahu was restored to health after searching for her lost son. Up until the 1840's, Pureora was covered in dense virgin forest, alive with birdlife. As European settlement expanded, demand for timber grew and forests across Aotearoa were felled. Pureora Forest was one of the last areas in the North Island to be harvested.

In 1946, the loggers moved in and cranked their saws, extensively logging large tracts of native forest, replacing them with exotic plantations. In 1978, environmentalists climbed high into the canopy to protest against further logging, resulting in the government preserving it for future generations.

Today Pureora Forest Park is one of the rarest and most precious stands of broad-leaf podocarp forest in the North Island, and one of the last remaining intact podocarp forests in the world. It is home to a range of remarkable and often rare native wildlife, including some remarkable birds.

The Timber Trail is one of 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand. Most of the trail passes through Pureora Forest Park, managed by the Department of Conservation. Acknowledging the Tangata whenua of Pureora and surrounding areas. Thank you also to the private landowners who generously allow access across their land – we ask that you respect this privilege.

Tip: Ensure you have warm gear as it can be cold at altitude. (See information on timbertrail.nz/plan-ahead/)

PUREORA TO PIROPIRO

40km, 4-6 hours

Begin your adventure at the map sign then into the bush pausing at the pou (Te Kanawa) contemplate the adventure to come.

The first 15km of the ride is a steady climb up to and around the slopes of Mt Pureora, towards the trail's high point.

Ride through Pikiariki Ecological Area, virgin rainforest saved from milling, where amazing podocarp trees dwarf all who pass underneath. The predator trapping programme in the area ensures the sound of birdlife in the morning is a welcoming cacophony – you may even be fortunate enough to have kākā parrots swoop past with their screeching call.

After 3km, take the marked short detour to the historic Crawler Tractor. Left here by a bushman who was recovering tōtara for fenceposts, the 1920s machine illustrates the grunt required to break in the land.

For the next 5km, the trail passes through open, felled area and scrub, crossing a few logging roads enroute. (Keep an eye on the directional arrows). As the trail climbs, don't forget to look back and admire the expanding views.

The forest edge shelter (8km) is a peaceful place for a break. From there, the trail heads further up, into the Cloud Forest – a mystical place with stunted trees draped in hanging moss. At the 11km mark, a short tramping track leads to Mt Pureora trig (1,135m) – well worth the return trip if weather and time are on your side. Sturdy footwear is required – allow 1.5 hours return. (Toilets here).



The trail's 971m highpoint is at 14km, with another shelter and picnic table at 16km.

The Timber Trail flows downhill for the next 8km, with glimpses of Lake Taupō appearing through the forest to the east. Keep your eyes and ears open for kākā and kererū.

At 22km, the first of eight significant bridges is reached. At 115m long, this suspension bridge is quite the engineering feat. Tick off Bog Inn, Orauwaka, Angels Rest and Harrison's Creeks. Pause to appreciate the old Stump House on the downhill (33km). Both curious and humorous, it's a testament to the unique lifestyle of the old tōtara fellers.

Piropiro (40km) is the site of an old mill town that once was home to a school, tennis courts and swimming pool.

Mid ride accommodation options here includes Black Fern Lodge (turn off to 6km side track at 35km) (full service or self cater), Timber Trail Lodge 39.5 km (full service), Piropiro DOC campsite (basic) 40km and Camp Epic (Camp and Glamping self cater options) 41km.

PIROPIRO TO ONGARUE

45km, 4-7 hours

This half of the Timber Trail begins with an undulating ride through tawa, tānekaha and regenerating podocarp forest.

At 44km the Maramataha Bridge is a highlight of the whole ride. At 141m long and 53m high it ranks as the third-longest suspension bridge in New Zealand.

On reaching the other side, it's a steady 2.5km climb to reach the ridge, from where it's an easy, flowing descent to the Terminus at 47kms. The Ellis and Burnard bush tramway and the hardy old bushman reached the end of the line here.

The trail follows the bush tramway route from here, undulating around hills, through cuttings and passing remnants of the pioneering past such as workers huts, cuttings and bridges – another 18 of them before you reach Ongarue! Tick off the Waikoura, Waione and Mangatukutuku suspension bridges along the way. Information panels bring to life stories of this fascinating past. Take a break at the Historic No.11 camp (58km) with its original hut – complete with graffiti and a jigger turntable. There is water and picnic tables here.



A unique highlight is the Ongarue Spiral (75km), a loop in the main tram line that you complete by way of a tunnel. An ingenious engineering solution, the spiral eased the grade for the timber trams that wound through this terrain.

The homeward leg passes through scrub and plantation forest before crossing a forestry road where the track skirts the edges of farmland.

The Timber Trail journey currently ends at Bennett Road hub, from there it's another 2km of riding along a quiet road to reach Ongarue.

Enjoy the satisfaction of having completed an awesome adventure. Be sure to share the tale with your friends – and with us, too. We'd love to hear your feedback!



Make a difference to the trail and share your experience via our short survey
timbertrail.nz/survey



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SHARE YOUR PHOTOS & STORIES
HELP SPREAD THE WORD



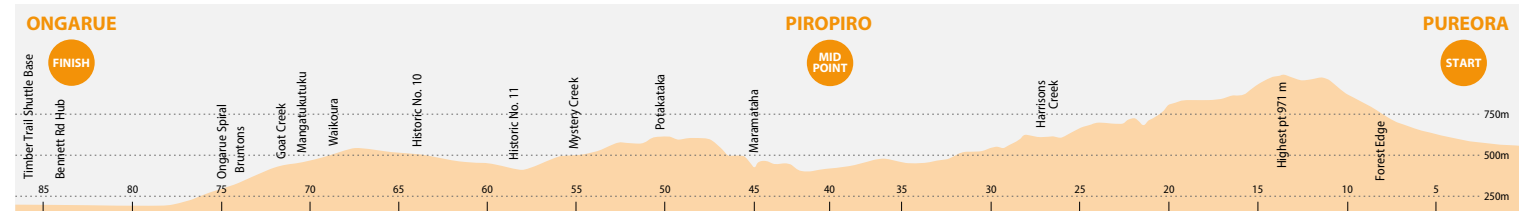
FOR MORE INFORMATION

timbertrail.nz





 Drive times to /from Ongerua
Te Kuiti – 45mins
Auckland – 3.5hrs
Wellington – 5hrs
Taumarunui – 18mins



GRADE 3 – Intermediate
(timbertrail.nz/trail-grade)

DURATION 2 days | Ride all year: be prepared for adverse weather conditions at all times.

DIRECTION Trail may be ridden in either direction. Most riders choose to ride from Pureora in the north to Ongarue in the South to make the most of the topography.

 **CARRY PLENTY OF WATER.**
Streams may be an emergency option.

 LIMITED CELLPHONE RECEPTION AT 8KM, 16KM AND 68KM. Carry a PLB.

