

# Walks, Tracks & Routes

## Northbank Road access

### Mt Richmond Forest Park



## Introduction

Entering the park from the Northbank of the Wairau River provides access to a series of valleys flowing out of Mt Richmond Forest Park. This section of the park offers many recreation opportunities: picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping, mountain biking, walking and tramping. Tracks in the valleys give access to marked and unmarked routes up forested ridges and along the open tops. A backcountry trip requires solid footwear, a detailed map and good fitness. There are few bridges, and route-finding skills are required in some places.

This publication provides information on the Onamalutu Scenic Reserve, Mt Royal, Pine Valley and Mt Fishtail, Top Valley and Mt Richmond, Mt Patriarch, Lake Chalice and the Goulter valley. Separate publications are available for the Alpine Route and Wakamarina Track. Regular park users are encouraged to purchase the Mt Richmond parkmap, edition 2 2009 available from a DOC office in Nelson or Marlborough.

## How to get there

The Northbank/Wairau turn-off is 16 km from Blenheim on State Highway 6, just north of the Wairau River bridge. Turn-offs to the side valleys are signposted from Northbank Road.



## Distances from State Highway 6

- |                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| • Onamalutu turn-off              | 5 km  |
| • Onamalutu Reserve               | 12 km |
| • Fabians Valley Road             | 21 km |
| • Quartz Creek Flat               | 27 km |
| • Pine Valley Road                | 25 km |
| • Mill Flat Campsite              | 30 km |
| • Te Rou Road (Timms Creek)       | 31 km |
| • Top Valley Road                 | 33 km |
| • Jubilee Flat                    | 40 km |
| • Patriarch Station               | 50 km |
| • Tiphead Stream (2WD road end)   | 56 km |
| • Goulter Car Park (4WD road end) | 63 km |

## Accommodation

Camping areas are provided at Onamalutu, Bartletts Creek, Quartz Creek Flat, Jubilee Flat and Mill Flat valley. There are a number of small huts throughout the backcountry. All are standard huts, requiring one Backcountry Hut Ticket per night or a Backcountry Hut Pass. Make sure you purchase your tickets or pass before your trip.

## Walks, tracks & routes

The individual areas of the Northbank are described here as they appear travelling west along North Bank Road.

### Mt Sunday/Mt Riley Route, 7 km, 8 h return

To get to the Mt Sunday (1310 m)/Mt Riley (1314 m) route turn right into Briggs Road before Onamalutu Domain, then right again into Davies Road, and carry on to the car park. The round trip takes about 8 hours. Mt Sunday Bivvy (2 bunks basic, no hut tickets required) is just below the summit of Mt Sunday or the track to Mt Riley.

### Onamalutu Scenic Reserve

The 26-hectare reserve has been enjoyed as a public recreation area since 1905. Open grassed areas are ideal for picnics and games while enjoyable walks can be taken on tracks winding through the forest by the river. An area is available for overnight camping (fees apply) and there are toilets and running water.

### Mt Royal Route, 9.5 km, 8 h return

Turn on to Fabians Valley Road and then Bartletts Road. Follow this road for five kilometres to Quartz Creek Flat, a large camping and picnic area where the Quartz Creek Route begins. The route follows Quartz Creek and passes the Sutherland Mine battery site after 15 minutes and follows a 4WD track to the forest where it begins climbing, steeply in places, to the bushline just below Mt Royal summit (1366 m) (4 hours from Quartz Creek Flat). There are no markers above the bushline. From the bushline on the northern side another marked route descends to Devils Creek Hut (6 bunks) in the Wakamarina valley.

**🚶 Pine Valley/Mill Flat, 1 km, 20 min**  
**Old Pine Valley Hut site, 2 km, 40 min**

Drive to the end of Pine Valley Road, through farmland (please leave gates as found) then pine forest. A walking track follows the riverside for 20 minutes and crosses a bridge to Mill Flat campsite and picnic area which has fireplaces and toilets. Mill Flat campsite can be accessed by 4WD vehicle (river crossing required). Pine Valley Nature Walk now called Mill Flat Walk (15 minutes) passes through mixed beech and podocarp forest. From Mill Flat it's a further 20 minute walk to the old Pine Valley Hut site.

**🚶 Mt Fishtail Route, 7 km, 5 h (one way to Fishtail Hut)**

For a longer walk continue past the old Pine Valley Hut site and take the track up the ridge above to Fishtail Hut (4 bunks). It's a further 1 hour to the summit of Mt Fishtail (1643 m).

## Mt Richmond (1760 m)

Mt Richmond can be approached from either Top Valley Stream or Timms Creek. It is possible to climb it in a day from the Top Valley side but a good level of fitness is essential. The Top Valley/Timms circuit makes a good weekend round trip.

**🚶 Timms Creek Route, 12.8 km, 6–7 h one way to Mt Fell Hut**

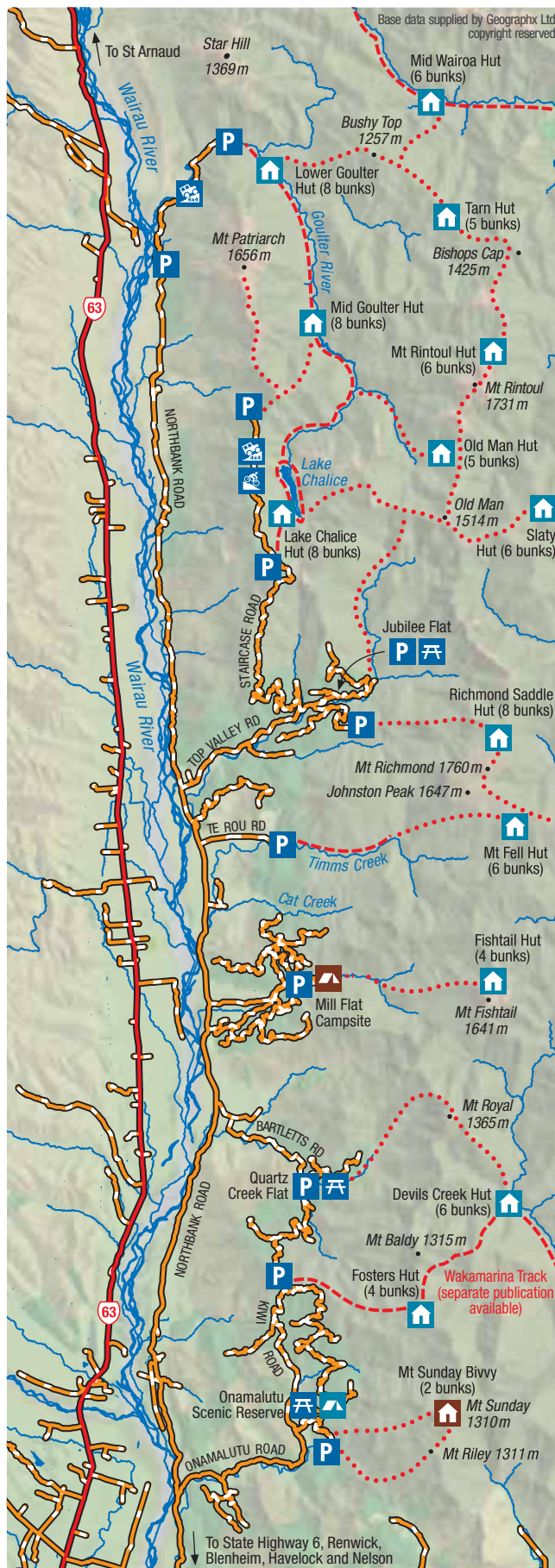
Turn off at Te Rou Road and follow it for 3 km to Timms Creek. From the car park a walking track proceeds up the true right of the creek for one hour to a flat area ideal for picnicking or swimming. From here a marked route (6–7h) leads up to Mt Fell Hut (6 bunks).

**🚶 Mt Fell Hut to Richmond Saddle Hut, 5.2 km, 3–4 h**

From Mt Fell Hut a poled route traverses tussock tops and rock along the Richmond Range up Mt Richmond (3h). For a longer tramp combine Timms Creek and Richmond Saddle Route.

**🚶 Richmond Saddle Route, 10.5 km, 6 h one way from Jubilee Flat**

Follow Top Valley Road for 7 km to Jubilee Flat. Just before the flat is Jackson Creek Road, which crosses Top Valley Stream and climbs for 4 km to a prominent



State Highway	Tramping track	Standard hut	Picnicking
Sealed road	Route	Basic hut/bivvy	Car park
Unsealed road	Standard campsite	Basic campsite	Four-wheel drive
			Mountain biking

This map is a guide only. For more information consult Parkmap Mt Richmond edition 2 2009 or the following Topo50 maps: BQ26 Nelson, BQ27 Rai Valley, BR26 Mount Patriarch, BR27 Waihopai.

0 4  
kilometres

ridge. A marked route leads up this ridge to Richmond Saddle Hut (8 bunks), one hour below the summit of Mt Richmond. Those with a 4WD vehicle can save two hours' walking by fording the stream and driving up Jackson Creek Road.

## Top Valley short walks

Top Valley is a popular recreational area, with short walks, swimming holes and picnic and camping areas.

### Forks Walk, 4 km, 1 h 30 min return

From the Forks Car Park the Forks Track follows the right fork of top valley stream to Whiteheads clearing, a broad terrace fringed by stacked river stones from the mining era. Approximately 300 m before the clearing is the marked route which climbs to Old Man summit (4h).

### Riverside Walk, 5 km, 2 h 30 min return

This walking track starts at the upstream end of Jubilee Flat and follows the stream along an old goldminers' track. There are gold tailings in the area and the historic battery site of the Wellington mine which sits across the stream in the forest.

## Lake Chalice

Access to this area is from Top Valley Road. Turn left onto Staircase Road and drive for 18 km, over Staircase Saddle to Chalice Car Park. At Enchanted Lookout is a short walk which culminates in a magnificent all-round view.

### Lake Chalice Track, 2.6 km, 1 h from car park

From the car park a benched tramping track leads down to Lake Chalice Hut (8 bunks) near the eastern end of the lake. Allow a little more time for the return journey.

### Chalice Loop Track, 6.5 km, 2 h 30 min return

This is a clockwise description. From Lake Chalice Hut a tramping track follows the southern shore of the lake for approximately an hour to a sign posted junction. Here it turns right and crosses the old landslide to the northern side of the lake and then skirts around some bluffy areas before sidling to the eastern end of the lake, where two tributaries enter close together. If the lake level is low walk around the shore to Lake Chalice Hut. If not, stay on the track, crossing the tributaries and emerging opposite Lake Chalice Hut.

## Track categories

### Tramping track

- 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.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Tramping/hiking boots required.


### Route


- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track unformed and natural, rough, muddy or very steep.
- Suitable for people with above average fitness. High-level backcountry skills and experience (including navigation and survival skills) required.
- Complete self-sufficiency required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Sturdy tramping/hiking boots required.


### Mountain biking grade 3 (intermediate)


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.

## Hut and campsite categories

 **Standard huts** have mattresses, water supply and toilet. Wood heaters are provided at huts below the bush line. The Backcountry Hut Pass or Backcountry Hut Tickets are required.

 **Basic huts** provide very basic shelter with limited facilities. No charge.

 **Standard campsites** have a limited range of facilities and services. Toilets (usually composting or pit variety) water supply (tap, stream, or lake) and vehicle or boat access. Wood barbeques and fireplaces, showers (cold), picnic tables, a cooking shelter and rubbish bins may be provided.

 **Basic campsites** have very limited facilities so you need to be fully self-sufficient. There are basic toilets and water from a tank, stream or lake. Access may be by road or boat.



## Chalice–Goulter Track

This is as a two to three day trip. The Goulter Track from Lake Chalice is a tramping track and recommended for those with moderate fitness and tramping experience. Transport between the two road ends will be needed.

### Lake Chalice to Mid-Goulter Hut, 9 km, 5 h

From the western end of Lake Chalice, the track descends past where the Goulter River begins at a group of springs. Once into the valley proper, the track follows the true left of the river all the way down to Mid-Goulter Hut.

### Mid-Goulter Hut to Lower Goulter Hut, 8 km, 3 h

The Goulter valley widens below Mid-Goulter Hut into one of the few areas in the forest park with extensive river flats.

If the river is high take the all weather track which follows the true left bank, crossing a number of side streams before finally climbing over a bluffy outcrop and dropping to the hut. If the river is low, travel in the riverbed is possible.

### Lower Goulter Hut to 4WD road end, 2 km, 45 min

#### Lower Goulter Hut to 2WD road end, 12 km, 2 h 45 min

From the hut the track carries on a further 45 minutes to a 4WD road end. It is two more hours to Tiphead Stream where two-wheel drive access is possible subject to weather and road conditions.

### Mt Patriarch (1656 m), 14 km, 5–6 h one way from Chalice Car Park

A 4WD road ideal for mountain bikes climbs steeply from Chalice Car Park for a further 7 km. It takes about three hours to walk, passing Planters Lookout, which has picnicking areas and great views.

At the end of the 4WD section a marked route leads to the summit (2 h), negotiating a series of steep rocky ridges with the occasional sidle. It is not recommended for inexperienced or unfit trampers.

## Further afield

Routes (marked and untracked) and tracks lead up on to the Richmond Range from the Goulter valley and Lake Chalice, making circuits possible via Mt Rintoul (1731 m) and Old Man (1514 m). Good fitness and route-finding experience will be required.

### Lake Chalice Hut to Old Man Hut (via Old Man), 10 km, 7 h

From Lake Chalice Hut wind around the eastern side of the lake for 15 minutes to a signpost, marking the start of the Old Man Route.

This route climbs steeply up to Chalice Knob (1530 m), down a spur to a saddle where the route from the Top Valley Forks Route joins it, and up the other side to Old Man Summit (1514 m). From here follow the Richmond Range west before descending to Old Man Hut (5 bunks). From Old Man summit there is a poled route leading north to Slaty Hut (6 bunks) via Ada Flat.

### Old Man Hut to Goulter River, 5 km, 3 h

From the hut the Goulter–Old Man Route descends steeply to a stream, following it to the Goulter River. Across the river options are varied: tracks lead up and down the Goulter (see “Chalice–Goulter Track” above), while down valley a marked route climbs up to the Mt Patriarch Road.

## Other recreation

### Mountain biking

Most tracks in Mt Richmond Forest Park are too rough for mountain bikes. However the crown access roads in the park are suitable; a ride from Chalice Car Park towards Mt Patriarch (grade 3) is the best, allow 3 hours return.



### Hunting

A permit is required from DOC to hunt in the forest park, or the forest owners to hunt in the plantation forest areas.

### Dogs

Dogs are allowed in the forest park under permit from DOC. A maximum of four dogs per party is permitted.

### Fishing

Trout anglers require a license from Fish and Game New Zealand. The Goulter is noted for its scenic qualities and good fish numbers.

## Please remember

**Safety:** Bad weather can occur at any time, so be prepared with warm and waterproof clothing and extra food. Snow, wind and fog are hazards of the open tops. Make sure you have enough experience for your trip. Always fill in hut books and ensure someone knows your intentions.

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

Remember your safety is your responsibility. To report any safety hazards in the outdoors call **DOC HOTline 0800 362 468**.

**Flooding:** In normal flows unbridged streams and rivers can be crossed, however in flood they can become impassable and you will need to be prepared to wait until floodwaters recede.

**Wasps** are a known hazard and are particularly common from December until April. Carry antihistamine if you are allergic to their stings.

**Cooking:** No cooking facilities are provided. All visitors should carry a portable stove.

**Fires:** Use only hut fire places or those provided at campsites. Make sure your fire is out before you leave and use only dead wood from fallen trees.

**Rubbish:** There are no rubbish facilities. Take all rubbish away with you.

**Drinking water:** The purity of drinking water in the park cannot be guaranteed. If you doubt the quality of any water source you should boil, filter or chemically treat it. Water should be carried along the ridge top routes in dry conditions.

**Forestry operations:** Road access (and therefore track access) can be restricted due to forestry operations. An information sign a short distance off State Highway 6, and public notices available at the South Marlborough Area office advise visitors of road closures.

**Track times:** Are estimated and should only be used as a guide.



**NEW ZEALAND  
environmental  
CARE CODE**

- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep waterways clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- *Toitū te whenua* (leave the land undisturbed)

## To find out more

Further information on Mt Richmond Forest Park can be found in the Mt Richmond Forest Park map and on the DOC website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or contact:

**Department of Conservation**

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