

# Otaki Forks

## Tararua Forest Park

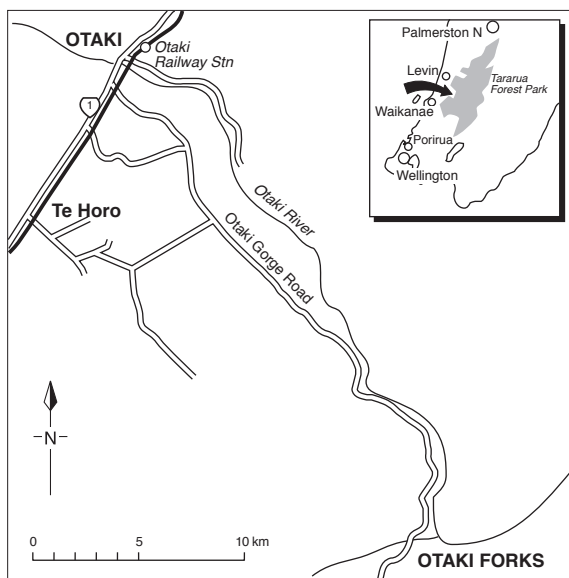


Otaki Forks is the main western entrance to the Tararua Forest Park. Two tributaries, the Waiotauru River and Waitatapia Stream, meet the Otaki River here. Open river terraces and regenerating bush surrounding the forks reflect the farming and sawmilling history. Otaki Forks has been developed for a wide range of activities including camping, picnicking and short walks to stone walls and old boilers—remnants of a pioneering era. It is also the start point for longer tramps into the backcountry.

### How to Get There

Otaki Forks is 19 km inland from Otaki township—approx. 1½ hr drive from Wellington or Palmerston North. The easiest turn-off from SH 1 is at Otaki Gorge Road, just south of the SH 1 bridge over the Otaki River. The last 5 km of the Otaki Gorge Road is unsealed, narrow and windy—please drive carefully.

A taxi service is available in Otaki.



### More Information

#### Department of Conservation

Kapiti Area Office.  
P.O. Box 141,  
WAIKANAE 5250  
Ph 04-296 1112

DOC Wellington Visitor Centre  
18–32 Manners St,  
WELLINGTON  
Ph: 04-384 7770

### Attractions and Facilities



Schoolhouse Flat camping area is set amongst bush and grassy terraces. Pay at caretaker's house or on request.



Boielle Flat, next to the Waiotauru River is a popular picnic area with flush toilets. Camping is not permitted in this area.



Several short walks from 30 min to 3½ hr. (See overleaf)



Otaki Forks provides access to the network of huts in Tararua Forest Park. Several huts are within 1 day's walk. Tracks vary in condition and terrain. Parawai Hut is a Standard hut (1 ticket per night), 5 minutes from the picnic area.



The Waiotauru River has several safe swimming pools.



The Otaki River gorge is popular for rafting and kayaking. It is a Grade 2 river.

### Please Remember



Rifles must not be carried loaded, nor discharged in the vicinity of Otaki Forks. Hunting permits are required in the park.



Dogs must be kept on a leash in the vicinity of Otaki Forks.

Back country hut tickets, purchased in advance, are required for the overnight use of huts in the park.

### Safety

Tararua Forest Park is renowned for its changeable weather and, because much of the terrain is rugged, trampers and walkers must travel prepared. Food and warm waterproof clothing should always be carried, even on short walks. Overnight parties should always include experienced trampers.

If you think there is a safety hazard in a conservation area, call DOC HOTline or the nearest DOC office.

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies  
For fire and search and rescue call 111



## Short Walks

### Arcus Loop



(easy, 1–2hr return)

Named after the Arcus family who farmed here from the 1930s, the Arcus Walk begins at the Waitotauru River swingbridge at Boielle Flat. Follow signs and posts across river terraces, streams and gullies. The walk provides a view to the campground before returning via the first section of Field Track.

### Fenceline Loop



(easy–moderate, 1½ – 2hr)

From the Waitotauru car park follow the signpost to your right. The walk passes through regenerating forest. Good views of the valley.

### Waitewaewae Track to Loghailer



(easy-moderate, 3½ hr return)

Cross the Waitotauru and Otaki River swingbridges, follow signs to Waitewaewae Track. Enter the bush on the old tramline track. Papa Creek is a pleasant lunch spot 10 min before the loghailer. Return the same way.

### Seed and O'Brien's Sawmill



(easy, 40 minutes return)

From the Waitotauru car park. Pass through manuka trees and bush before coming out on grassy river terraces to the boiler and other remaining machinery that drove the sawmill from 1929 to 1931. Return the same way.

### Sheridan Creek to Loghailer



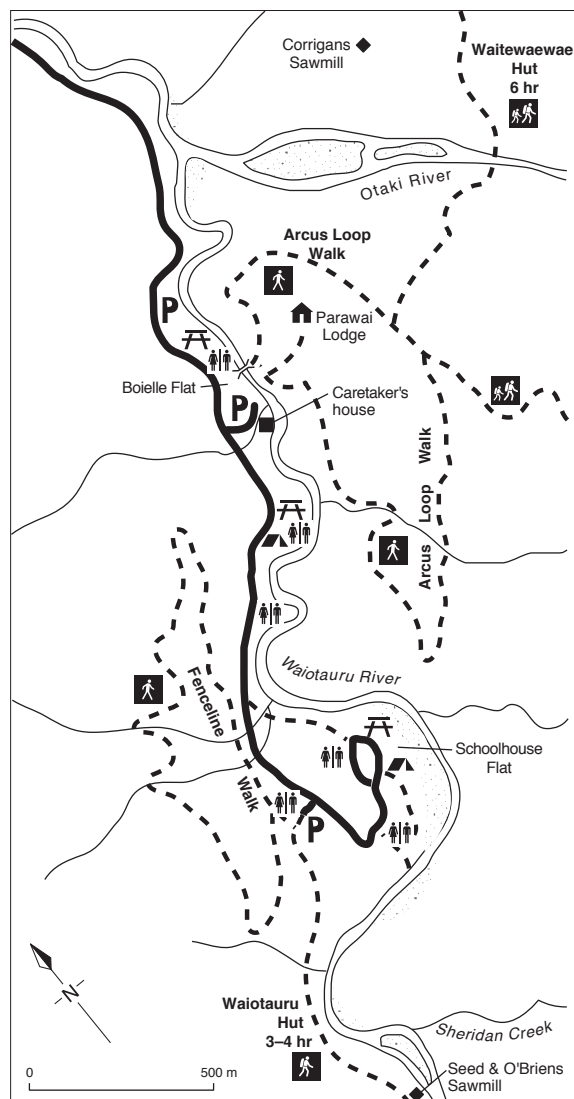
(moderate, 2½ – 3hr return)

This river route should be attempted only in fine weather with low river levels. Cross the Waitotauru River at top of campground. Follow the Waitotauru River to Sheridan Creek, which has to be crossed often. Good picnic spots along the riverbed. Orange markers indicate where to enter the bush on the right about ¾ hr up. Cross the creek again to begin a 15 min walk in bush to the loghailer. Return the same way. Take care on slippery rocks.

### Schoolhouse Flat walks



There are two other short 5–10 min walks: one through the patch of bush at Schoolhouse Flat, the other from the campground to the road.



### Track classification

Symbols on the map and direction signs in this area indicate the track classifications in this area:



**Walking Track:** Mostly well formed but with some steep, rough or muddy sections. Suitable for people with low to moderate fitness and abilities. Light tramping (hiking) boots or walking shoes required.



**Easy Tramping Track:** Generally well formed but with some steep, rough or muddy sections. Suitable for people with limited backcountry (remote area) experience. Light tramping boots required.



**Tramping Track:** Mostly unformed, may be rough or steep. Expect river crossings. Suitable for people with moderate to high backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival. Tramping boots required.