

Manawatu Gorge Tracks

Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve



NEW ZEALAND

ENVIRONMENTAL
CARE CODE

Protect plants and animals

Remove rubbish

Bury toilet waste

Keep streams and lakes clean

Take care with fire

Camp carefully

Keep to the track

Consider others

Respect our cultural heritage

Enjoy your visit

*Toitu te whenua
(Leave the land undisturbed)*

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For fire and search and rescue call 111

Manawatu Gorge

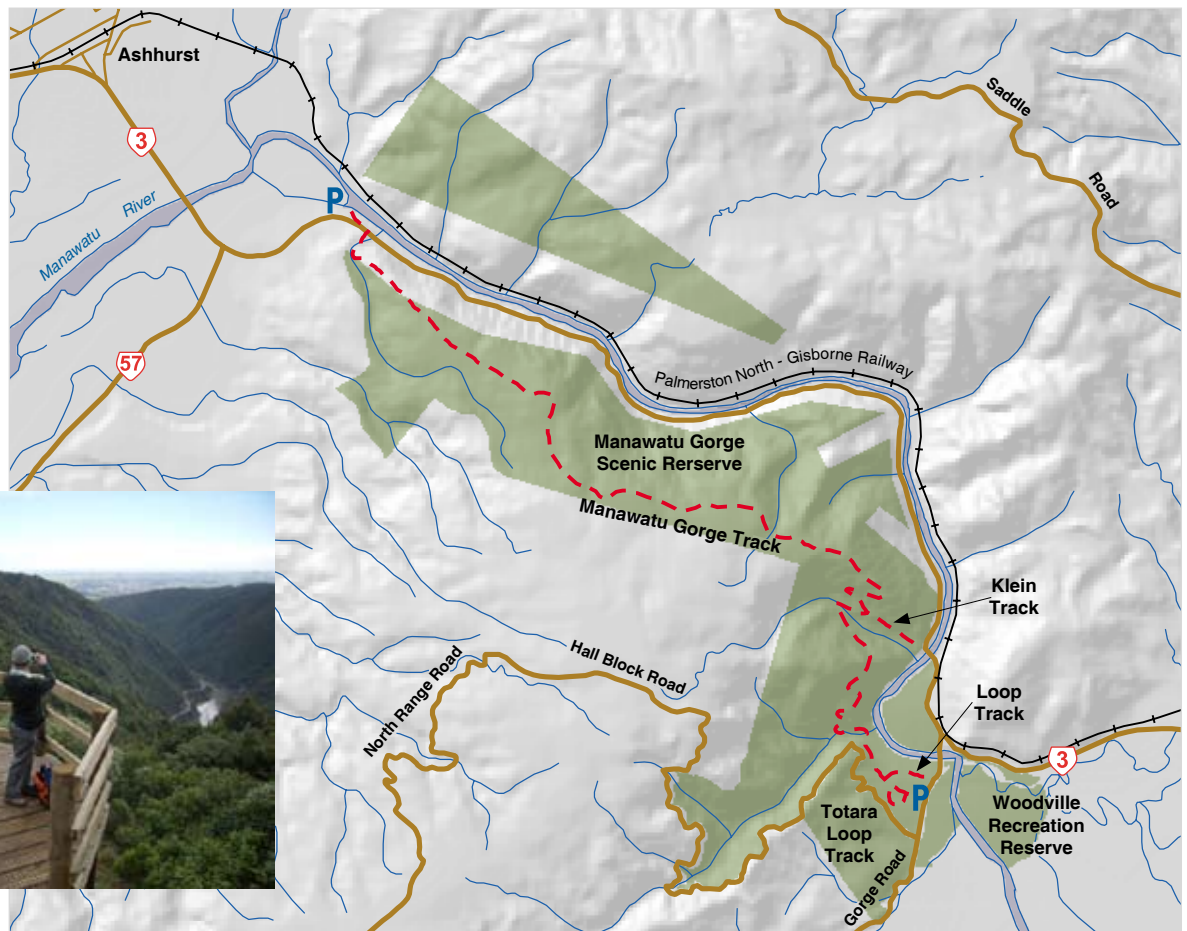
It is hard to imagine that such a beautiful and accessible piece of forest is less than 20 minutes drive from Palmerston North city. If you haven't walked these tracks before, then it is a "must do", particularly for those who live in the Manawatu.

The gorge is unusual because it is one of the few places in New Zealand where the river crosses a mountain range. The Manawatu River was created long before the mountain ranges were born. As the land rose, the river continued to cut its way through the mountains creating the gorge. To the north is the Ruahine Range and to the south lie the Tararuas.

Location

The Manawatu Gorge Tracks are located approximately 12 km east of Palmerston North adjacent to State Highway 3. Access to the Manawatu Gorge track from the west (Ashhurst end) is from the carpark on the left side of the road immediately before the gorge entrance.

From the east (Woodville end) the track entrance is located on the Gorge Road just across the Ballance Bridge. The Klein, Totara and Loop tracks are accessed from this end.



Viewing platform.
Photo: DOC.



Note:

The Manawatu Gorge Tracks are currently being upgraded and due for completion in spring 2009.

Manawatu Gorge Track

Walking Track, 3 - 5 hours one way.

Please note that the Manawatu Gorge Track is NOT A LOOP TRACK.

If you are using two cars, then park one at the Woodville end and leave the other in the carpark at the Ashhurst end. It only takes about 10 minutes extra driving to sort out the cars. If you choose to walk for an hour, turn around and come out the same way, it is recommended that you start from the Ashhurst (western) end.

Suitability

Although the track is steep in places, has steep steps, and may be slippery when wet, if you wear walking shoes or boots and take it carefully, it is very achievable for people of average fitness.

Things to see

From the Ashhurst end, the short walk up the stream at the start of the track is a lovely way to immerse yourself in the forest experience. The sound of cascading water drowns out the sound of traffic and makes the busy gorge feel a lot further away than it is.

The vegetation type is mainly tawa and podocarp forest but also has a significant number of broadleaved trees. What makes this piece of forest so unusual is the predominance of the giant maidenhair fern. This fern is found only in the Manawatu in New Zealand. Nikau palms are here in abundance giving a tropical touch to the track.

On a fine day, the various viewpoints along the track are impressive, and the latest additions to the landscape, the wind turbines, are an interesting feature as well.



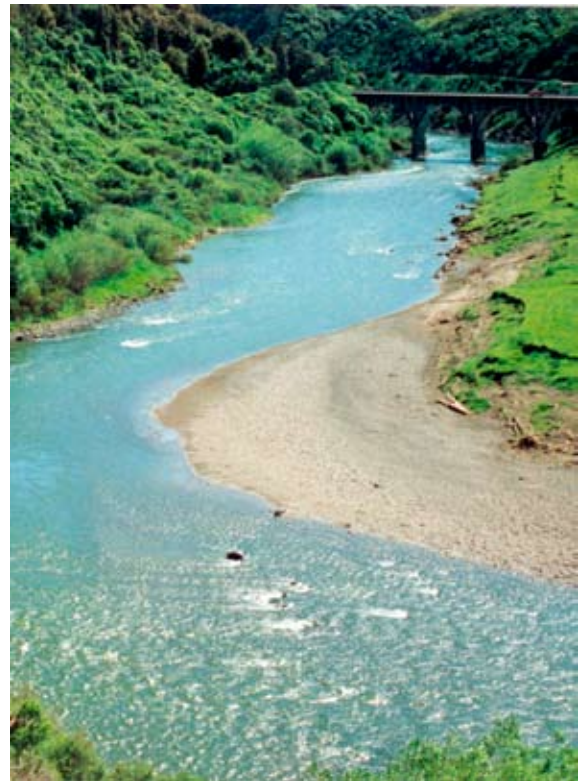
Wind turbines.
Photo: J. Spence

Klein Track

Walking Track, 1.5 - 2 hours one way.

Please note that the Klein Track is NOT A LOOP TRACK.

Starting from the Woodville end, the Klein Track gives an alternative shorter walk to that of the Manawatu Gorge Track. Transport needs to be arranged as this track finishes back down on State Highway 3 near the gorge bridge.



Manawatu River from track.
Photo: DOC.

Short Loop Tracks

Loop Track, 15 - 30 minutes

Totara Loop Track, 10 minutes

If your time is limited or you have a very young family who can't manage a long walk, then there are two short loop tracks located at the Woodville end of the Manawatu Gorge.

The Loop and Totara Loop Tracks are an easy meander through beautiful native bush, although there are some wooden stairs to negotiate.

The Totara Loop Track is a very special place, as there are signs here made by children, for children. The "Nature through the eyes of a child" interpretation signs provide unique insight for parents into the way children see the natural world around them. College Street pupils from Palmerston North, aged 8 - 10 years, researched and designed the signs as part of their environmental unit at school in 2005.

Biodiversity Project

The goal of this project is to preserve, sustain and enhance the biodiversity, scenic and recreational values of this unique site.

Partners and the community will work together with a focus on controlling pest animals and plants, replanting native vegetation and upgrading recreational facilities.

For further information on this project, see; [Manawatu Gorge Biodiversity brochure](#).