



North Canterbury Trekking Routes Route Descriptions

This describes horse trekking routes in North Canterbury, outside of the St James Conservation Area, but easily accessible from Hanmer Springs as a base. These routes are towards the south and south-west of the St James Conservation Area.

Ride times, when given, are for a medium walk speed for horses.

Historic Hope Kiwi Pack Track

Descriptions kindly provided by Peter Hurst.

Engineers Camp to Hope Kiwi Lodge. 3 hours

Start at horse paddock opposite Rogers Crescent. Secure your float and vehicle. There is very limited mobile coverage at Engineers Camp so stand outside the Downers Building to obtain this coverage. Please note that the cell phone coverage at Engineers Camp outside the Downers Yard only works for contacting Emergency Services.

Use public ROW at end of Rogers Crescent to access Boyle River. Ride upstream about 80 metres and climb up bank by cableway. Or downstream about 200 metres and climb up bank by green markers. Follow track all the way to Hope River bed. Pass through horse-gate to river. Riding time 1 hour.

Cross river onto farm track. Stay on farm track as this is the old Historic Pack Route to the West Coast. Make sure you stay on the legal road, in the riverbed or on the Marginal Strip (Queens Chain) until you get to a large shingle fan about 4 kms up the track.

Ride down this shingle fan for 200 metres and take the track on the left at the bottom of the shingle fan. The track is not marked here, but the direction is easy to follow. Follow this track upstream for 500 metres. Cross the Hope River. You should now be on the true left of the Hope River.

Head up the flats to the Kiwi Stream. Use the horse-gate at Kiwi Stream and ride up to Hope Kiwi Lodge following the Kiwi Stream. There is a large horse paddock at Hope Kiwi Lodge. Total riding time from Engineers Camp to Hope Kiwi Lodge 3 hours.

Hope Kiwi Lodge

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/canterbury/places/lake-sumner-forest-park/things-to-do/huts/hope-kiwi-lodge/>

Kiwi Stream to Top Hope Hut, 2 hours

Pass through the horse-gate at Kiwi Stream. Immediately turn right (West) and ride about 150 metres to the 4wd track opposite the trampers swing-bridge which spans the Hope River at the wee

gorge. Ride through the bush on the 4wd track till you emerge at the magnificent St Jacobs Flat and ride up to the St Jacobs Hut. Riding time 40 minutes.

Keep riding, criss-crossing the riverbed, mainly on the true left bank till you get to Top Hope Hut. There is plenty of grass at both the huts in this magnificent valley and no Te Araroa walkers in this area. Riding time 1 hour 20 minutes from St Jacobs Hut to Top Hope Hut.

St Jacobs Hut

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/canterbury/places/lake-sumner-forest-park/things-to-do/huts/st-jacobs-hut/>

Top Hope Hut

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/canterbury/places/lake-sumner-forest-park/things-to-do/huts/top-hope-hut/>

Excursions from Top Hope Hut

From Top Hope Hut ride up to Hot Spring Creek. About 15 minutes upstream, look for a marker which indicates the beautiful natural hot spring. Enjoy your soak!

From Hot Spring Creek for the adventurer ride up to the Hope Pass. Follow the river and the markers and the very old 4wd track in places to the pass. You need to be experienced in navigation and bush travel to get there. Riding time from Hot Spring Creek 2 hours.

A big swamp is located on the Hope Pass, so don't think you can travel with your horses that way! Enjoy the spectacular scenery.

Hope Kiwi Lodge to Lake Sumner, 2 hours and 30 minutes

Ride up the Kiwi Stream following the 4wd track. At the very end of the flat follow the green horse track markers into the bush. You are now riding on the Historic Hope Kiwi Pack Track right through to Lake Sumner.

Riding time from Hope Kiwi Lodge to Lake Sumner 2 hours and 30 minutes. This track is very well worn by horses. Look out for bees and some windfall at times.

Amuri Pass Route to the West Coast

Descriptions based on directions kindly provided by Peter Hurst.

Engineers Camp to Doubtful Hut, 2 hours.

Start at horse paddock opposite Rogers Crescent.
Secure your float and vehicle here.

Take ROW to Boyle River at the end of Rogers Crescent.
Cross the Boyle River 80 Metres upstream and climb up the bank by the cable or 200 Metres downstream by the green horse markers.
Head west on the 4WD track towards the Doubtful River.

Alternatively, leave from the carpark opposite the Doubtful River confluence. Going this way, when you climb the bank by the DOC sign make sure you turn left and follow the arrows. Don't be tempted to follow the tramper track here as the small swamp by the sign will swallow your horse.

Generally, follow the green markers up the river on the track.

You will get to a wide boulder strewn creek. The track exit on the opposite bank has been washed away. The track exit on the opposite bank has been washed away. Pick your way around the toe of this creek and re-join the track about 200 metres upstream.

Follow on up the track, weaving in and out of the matagouri and bush. Any green horse markers you see should be followed, easy really. The three-bunk Doubtful Hut is located on the Doubtful River riverbank. Riding time to Doubtful Hut from Engineers Camp is 2 hours.

Doubtful Hut to Doubtless Hut, 1 hour and 30 minutes

Doubtful Hut to Amuri Pass, 2 hours and 20 minutes

From Doubtful Hut follow up the riverbed until you reach the turnoff to Doubtless Hut. From Hut to Hut it takes 1 hour 30 minutes. There are few track markers in the riverbed.

Just keep plodding up the river following any green track markers you see.

From the turnoff to Doubtless Hut here the option is to travel up the Doubtless River to the Doubtless Hut, where a horse paddock is located, or continue on to the Amuri Pass. It takes 10 minutes to ride to the hut from this point.

It will take 1 hour to ride to the Amuri Pass from the turnoff to the Doubtless Hut. Phantom Flat is the favoured camping spot, with ample grass for your horses.

Amuri Pass to the West Coast, 4 hours 30 minutes

There are five crossings of the Waiheke River from Amuri Pass to Slaty Creek Hut. From Amuri Pass follow the track down into the bush and cross three creeks till you arrive at Big Log Creek.

Lead down the track just past Big Log Creek, as marked to the Waiheke River. Cross the river twice to arrive at Torrent Creek.

You are able to camp at Driftwood Camp or proceed along to Slaty Creek Hut, generally on the true left of the Waiheke River. Riding Time from Amuri Pass to Slaty Creek is 2 hours

There is a horse paddock located at Slaty Creek Hut.

From Slaty Creek ride out to the Department of Conservation carpark at Waititi Downs. When crossing the Tutaekeri River head directly opposite the crossing point to regain the track through the gorse.

There is a horse gate at the carpark to enable access. Riding time from Slaty Creek to Waititi Downs is 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Enjoy your ride crossing the Southern Alps. Total Distance is sixty-four kilometres.

It is a tough ride and horses need to be fit and well shod. and used to this type of topography and mountain travel.

IMPORTANT: Check river levels and rainfall on the ECAN website before you leave home:

<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/data/riverflow/>

This pack and stock track is one of the Historical Routes from Canterbury to the West Coast. It is part of our heritage and should be preserved. Most of the gradients were built to allow packhorses to travel on them. The entire track has been reformed in places and is generally 1.8 metres wide to cater for packhorses.

This pack track is a credit and a testimonial to the early settlers of New Zealand. They broke in this country by hand and with horses, so please ride this.

Mary Holloway
Hanmer Springs Horse Riders Inc
23 August 2019