



Arthur's Pass to Rākaia River

 Walking

Length

71.5 km

Journey Time

3-4 days

Region

[Canterbury](#)

Sub-Region

[Selwyn District](#)

Part of Collections

[Te Araroa - New Zealand's Trail](#) , [Te Araroa - South Island](#)

Track maintained by

[Te Araroa Trail Trust](#) 

Klondyke Track - 9km / 2-3hr

The Klondyke Track is a Te Araroa specific link. It reduces the road connection between the Deception-Mingha and Harper River Tracks.

The track starts on SH73 at Greyneys Shelter Campsite and heads south, initially on the road shoulder but soon diverts to the Bealey River margin. This is from the left hand side of the road. The track then heads towards Klondyke Corner Campsite, a basic campsite with a pavilion, carpark and toilets.

The track beyond Klondyke Corner remains on the true right bank of the Bealey River. There are occasional marker poles which lead to the Waimakariri River confluence. Cross the river, as water levels allow, and climb up to SH73 before the Bealey Spur settlement. If the Waimakariri is up, trampers are able to cross on the road bridge, about 1km to the west.

The Bealey Hotel, which is 12km east of Arthur's Pass and 150km west of Christchurch is a good point where trampers can organize transport with most operators passing on their way to Arthur's Pass or Christchurch.

From Bealey Spur, continue east on SH73 and follow the road's shoulder to Cora Lynn Rd. Turn right here and walk past the Arthur's Pass Wilderness Lodge and through the gate marked 'Cass-Lagoon Track'. The track ends at the car park a short distance further along. Bealey Hut (6-bunks) is a five minute walk beyond the car park, up the track and on the right hand side.

Harper River Track

The initial section, to Hamilton Hut, is on DOC's Cass Saddle-Lagoon Saddle Track and through Craigieburn Forest Park. The final portion of the track is adjacent to Glenthorne Station and finishes at Harper Rd. Here trampers are able to walk a route based on a paper road, which runs along the Harper River fringe.

Cora Lynn Carpark to Hamilton Hut - 15.5km / 7-8hr

The track climbs a short distance from the carpark to Bealey Hut, a basic 6 bunk hut off on a short side trail to the right. Beyond the hut the track continues to climb through beech and exotic forest. It then traverses the broad north face of Mt Bruce, initially through forest but then through open tussock country. This is up towards Lagoon Saddle.

From the Saddle, follow board-walked sections down to the bushline. Lagoon Saddle A-Frame Shelter (2 people) is a short distance lower down. The track then descends to the Harper River. The next section down to West Harper Hut has numerous river crossings but these are straightforward in normal conditions.

West Harper Hut, with its dirt floor and canvas bunks, provides historical interest and welcome shelter in poor weather. Beyond the hut the route is an all weather one. The Harper River is crossed on a swing bridge. There is also a swingbridge across Hamilton Creek near Hamilton Hut.

Hamilton Hut to Harper Rd - 18km / 5-6hr

Return to the sign at the true left side of Hamilton Creek. From here Te Araroa heads down to the Harper River confluence, beyond which the track follows the Harper River downstream. For much of the way an old 4WD track can be used but this leads to numerous river crossings.

If the river is high it is possible to remain on the true left all the way down to the Pinnacles without too much additional effort or time, EXCEPT for a spot where a ravine has formed. This means a river crossing cannot be avoided. The river can pool adjacent to this point, so if the water is high, waiting it out or retreating to Hamilton Hut could be the wisest course of action.

The track remains within Craigieburn Forest Park until about a 1/3 of the way down to the Pinnacles. It then enters Glenthorne Station (we ask that respect is given when on this station and please stick to the route - no short cuts, if you do, you will be trespassed by the land owners) on a route based on a paper road. This is along the fringe of the Harper River on the true left side. The Pinnacles become visible lower down across the river on the true right side.

Below the Pinnacles the track continues down the Harper River, which trampers need to ford to make further progress. The best place to do this is above the Avoca River confluence. The Avoca in turn is crossed separately. Continue down the farm track to Harper Road and cross Harper River on the road bridge.

Harper Road reaches a junction near Harper Village where the Harper River Track ends. If you need somewhere to stay then there is a free overnight campsite on TrustPower owned land about 300m distant. This is down the road marked with the "2km to Lake Coleridge" sign. The campsite is sign-posted on the left hand side of this road. Water is available from a tap in the campsite and there is a modern longdrop toilet.

- Note - it is 48km from Hamilton Hut to Lake Coleridge - only the fastest walkers should attempt to do this in a day. There are NO places to camp between Harper Village and Lake Coleridge so the recommended approach is to camp at the Harper Village campsite then go

from there to Lake Coleridge in a day - plan to reach Lake Coleridge before 5pm to maximise your chances of hitching a lift out to Rākaia Gorge/Methven. There is NO budget accommodation, or camping spots, in/around Lake Coleridge Village so you'll need to walk to Lake Coleridge Village and hitch out that day if you don't plan to use the local accommodation.

For something different - [Alps 2 Ocean](#) ☐ offer the experience of an inflatable kayak from Harper Village to the trailhead at Glenrock on the south side of the Rākaia.

From Harper Village, travel 22km along Harper Road past Lake Selfe, Lake Evelyn and over the Ryton River Road Bridge to the Homestead Road junction.

- Note: Take extreme care, this road has a 100km/h speed limit and drivers are often not expecting walkers. Wear hi-viz clothing/pack cover and don't use headphones. Stick to the extreme edge of the road.

Turn right here and Te Araroa's next section, the Lake Hill Track, starts at the stile about 900m down on the right hand side of the road.

Lake Hill Track - 3.5km / 1¼hr

The Lake Hill Track provides access to a section of the Lake Coleridge foreshore and joins Homestead Road with Coleridge Intake Road. In the process it follows a narrow strip of public land which adjoins private property.

- Note: Walkers are asked to keep strictly to the marked route and to respect the property rights of the adjoining land owners. This includes giving way to stock and farm operations, and adhering to the 'no dogs, camping or fires' conditions of access.

The track starts on Homestead Road at a stile, which is 900m from the junction with Harper and Lyndon Roads. Travel is in the direction of Lake Coleridge and is initially easy and through farm land where stock are likely to be grazing.

After about 700m the marked route passes through a tussock section as it crosses a wetland fringe. Conditions may be damp underfoot here.

Beyond the wetland, the route joins the edge of a farm track then veers to the left on a foot track as it approaches the lake shore. There is a short climb and descent to avoid a bluff and then about half a kilometre of level lakeside walking before the foot track crosses another farm track.

From the far side of the farm track the marked route ascends away from the lake. After a short climb the gradient eases and the track continues to follow poles towards Coleridge-Intake Road. On its way to the road the track joins and then departs from a farm track. Trampers need to be vigilant to follow the markers to ensure they stay on the legal route.

The track ends on Coleridge-Intake Road at the stile next to the farm gate. This is about 1.3km below the intersection with Algidus Road.

Walk south up Coleridge-Intake Road (away from the lake) from the Lake Hill Track trailhead towards the Algidus Road intersection. Continue through the intersection on Coleridge-Intake Road. Beyond the cattle stop the road and surrounding land is owned by Trust Power. Continue on the road as it enters pine forest and veers to the right. This is a 3km walk.


Arboretum Track - 900m / 20min

The track starts on Coleridge Intake Road on the Rākaia River side of the Algidus Road intersection and on Trust Power owned land. This is on the right as Coleridge-Intake Road makes its first hair pin turn to the left. Look out for markers here and a track that has been cut through broom. This formed track quickly opens up and for a few metres follows the pipes down towards the power station before turning left to enter pine forest.

Lower down the track leaves the forest, turns right, and descends directly through open country. It enters the Arboretum at a gate on the left and follows a well formed path passing a number of sign posted specimen trees along the way. The track end is through the memorial gate marking the exit from the Arboretum to Hummocks Road.

The Arboretum comprises a site of approximately 2 hectares and was established from 1933 by Harry Hart, who served as superintendent of the Lake Coleridge Power Station for 30 years until 1954. It now contains one of New Zealand's best mature conifer collections including examples of at least two thirds of the world's pine species.

Click [HERE](#)  for an information poster about the Lake Coleridge area.

[Lake Coleridge Lodge](#)  is not operating at this time. Service information has been removed from these notes 25 Jan 2020

To get around the Rākaia River, turn left on Coleridge Road, then right on ZigZag Road to Rākaia Gorge (24km from Lake Coleridge).

Across the second bridge is Rākaia Gorge Campground.

Otherwise continue on Coleridge Road and turn right at SH72, then turn left at SH77 for the town of Methven (40.5km from Lake Coleridge).

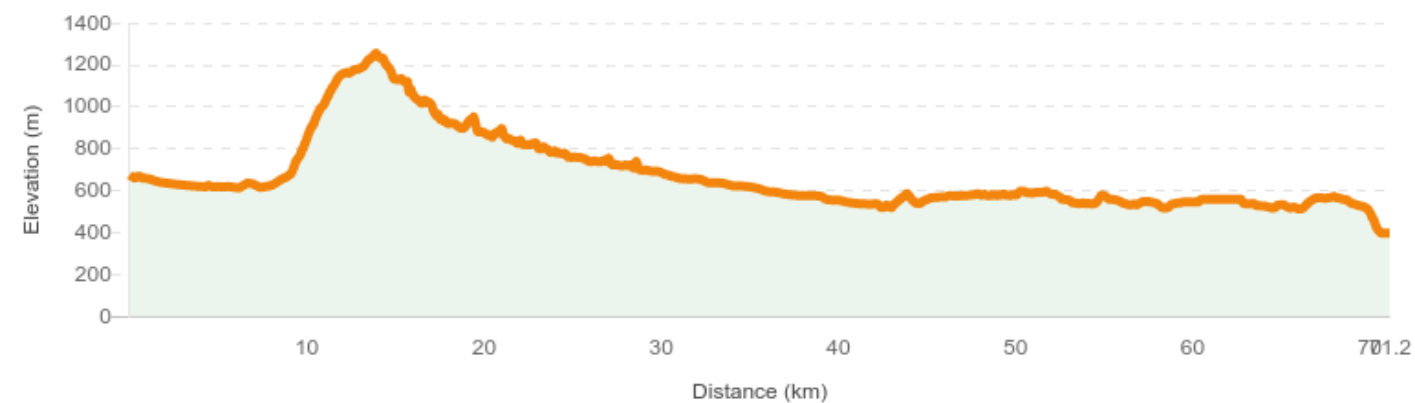
Conditions:

Potential hazards

- Vehicles on road or track take care along SH73 and Harper Rd
- Farming operations adjacent to Harper River
- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers
- Track exposed to sun, wind or cold
- Weather extremes

How to get here

Track Elevation and Map



More information

[Te Araroa Canterbury trail notes, including information about accommodation, transport and resupplying](#)

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