

## Take care visiting Ahuriri Conservation Park

**Be prepared:** The weather in this conservation park can change rapidly. Check the weather forecast before you leave home. Carry warm and waterproof clothing and be prepared to retreat if rain causes river levels to rise.

**Tell someone your intentions:** Leave your trip intentions with a friend or family member. You can also visit [www.adventuresmart.co.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.co.nz) and leave intentions there. Your safety is your responsibility.

**Fire:** Fire restrictions apply to all public conservation land. Consult with local information centres or DOC offices for the current fire status.

**Avalanche:** Backcountry travellers should be able to recognise hazardous avalanche terrain and run-out zones. We recommend carrying 457 khz transceivers, probes and shovels. Avalanches can flow down to valley floors anytime from May to November during, and after, severe snow storm cycles.

**Communications:** Cell phone coverage cannot be relied upon in this park; satellite phones or mountain radios are a better option. We recommend all parties carry a personal locator beacon for increased safety.

**Navigation:** Carry the appropriate topographic map for your backcountry trip.

### Take care with river crossings

- Always treat the river with respect.
- Never cross a dirty or flooded river.
- When four-wheel driving, have an adult walk the river first.
- River currents are often stronger than they appear.
- River levels can rise rapidly due to rain in the catchment headwaters.
- River levels may rise due to afternoon snow melt (spring).
- Braids of the river can shift and there may be soft sinking sand/silt.
- If in doubt, retreat.



River crossing—safely

### Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Department of Conservation  
South Canterbury District Office  
Wairepo Road, TWIZEL  
Phone: 03 435 0802  
Email: [Twizel@doc.govt.nz](mailto:Twizel@doc.govt.nz)

For more information about recreation and conservation visit: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

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NEW ZEALAND  
environmental  
CARE CODE

- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- 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



9 421005 173116 >

# Ahuriri Conservation Park

SOUTH CANTERBURY



Department of  
Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai



Upper Ahuriri valley

Ahuriri Conservation Park contains over 49,000 hectares of rugged mountain country, valuable and vulnerable wetlands, tussock lands and beech/tawhai forest. Spectacular scenery and ease of access make the park a popular destination for recreation. Whether you are travelling on foot, or by vehicle, mountain bike or horse, this park is certainly worth visiting.

### Links to the past

The Ahuriri valley is named after the Ngāi Tahu chief, Tu Ahuriri. Māori used the valley as a route to the West Coast (for collecting greenstone/pounamu) and travelled via Canyon Creek, Hunter valley and Hāwea (although the easier route over Lindis Pass was preferred).

In the late 1800s there were three pastoral lease runs within the Ahuriri valley; Birchwood, Ben Avon and Longslip stations. In 1873 the high-country run called Birchwood was farmed and described as being 'more suitable for keas than sheep'. The Birchwood run had been managed by a succession of runholders when Edgar Williamson took control of the lease in 1942. In 1951 the Williamson family purchased Birchwood with Ron & Jennifer Williamson continuing the farming legacy. In 2004 the station was bought by the Nature Heritage Fund to protect the natural landscape and secure public access up the valley.

Today, as you drive along the initial part of Birchwood Road you are passing through Longslip and Ben Avon stations. Public access easements have been created off Birchwood Road to secure admittance through these high-country stations.

*Please ensure you:*

- stay on the public access easement
- leave gates as you find them
- do not disturb stock
- do not take your dog unless you have private runholder's permission
- take all rubbish away with you




Birch Creek easement

### Your hut fees help maintain the huts

Hut fees go back into upgrading and maintaining our backcountry huts. Children up to the age of 18 years stay free in all the backcountry huts in this region.

Logburner  open fire 



Ahuriri Base Hut 



Hagens Hut 



Hideaway Hut  
*no heating*



Shamrock Hut 



Snowy Gorge Hut  
*no heating*



Top Hut 

### Camping

Camping is possible anywhere within Ahuriri Conservation Park—look at the map carefully so you know where park boundaries are. You cannot camp on any of the public access easements that lead to public conservation land.

### Be a responsible dog owner

*Always keep your dog under control*

- Remove any dog droppings from tracks or track verges.
- Dogs are not allowed inside huts. Tie your dog up somewhere suitable outside.
- Check whether pest-control poisons have been laid in the area you wish to visit. Go to [www.doc.govt.nz/pesticide-summaries](http://www.doc.govt.nz/pesticide-summaries).
- If passing through farmland, help prevent the spread of sheep measles by keeping your dog regularly dosed with an effective tapeworm drug. Alternatively collect dog faeces and take to an appropriate waste disposal centre.



### Tread carefully with your horse

Make sure all your riding gear and horse's hooves are free of any seeds or soil that could potentially spread weeds.

- Have your horse eat weed-free feed for 48 hours prior to entering public conservation land.
- Do not take your horse into fragile areas such as wetlands.
- Keep horse manure away from hut and campsite areas.



No dogs 

Dogs on a lead allowed 

## Lower Ahuriri valley

Birchwood Road and Ahuriri Conservation Park are signposted off SH8, approximately 17 km south of Omarama. Two-wheel drive vehicles can drive along Birchwood Road, a gravel road, to Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary. Drive carefully and watch out for any stock grazing on road verges.



Lower Ahuriri valley

### Ahuriri river access

The Ahuriri River gorge, where Birchwood Road sidles close to Ahuriri River, provides a fishing spot and is approximately 3 km along Birchwood Road from the SH8 turn-off. Ireland Bridge is another popular stopping place (5 km along Birchwood Road). A further 2 km up the road is a signposted easement to Ahuriri River, immediately past a one-lane bridge.

### Wetlands provide a home for our wildlife

The easiest wetland to explore in Ahuriri Conservation Park is Ben Avon Wetland beside Birchwood Road. You can get a good overview of the wetland and wildlife from your car seat! You may even spot a kākī/black stilt, an endangered wading bird found in the Mackenzie/Waitaki region.



Kākī/black stilt

### Ahuriri river easement

#### Birchwood Road to Ahuriri River

20 min, 1 km

This easement is 11.5 km along Birchwood Road and opposite Avon Burn car park. The easement takes you through private farmland to Ahuriri River. Follow marker poles beside a fenceline. Cross the river and continue along Ahuriri River East Branch to East Ahuriri Hut, a derelict musterer's hut from the 1890s (10 km). From the hut it is another 16 km to Lake Ohau Road.



This track is part of Te Araroa (The Long Pathway), a walking trail from Cape Reinga to Bluff. See [www.teararoa.org.nz](http://www.teararoa.org.nz).

#### Avon Burn

There is a formed car park and signage at the entry point into the Avon Burn valley (off Birchwood Road). The Avon Burn valley borders the southern edge of Ahuriri Conservation Park.

#### Avon Burn – Top Timaru Hut

Car park to Mt Martha Saddle 6 hr, 15 km

Mt Martha Saddle to Top Timaru Hut 2 hr, 7 km

This track is part of Te Araroa and passes over Mt Martha Saddle (1680 m) before descending to the head of Timaru valley and Top Timaru Hut.

#### Melina Ridge Track

Avon Burn car park to SH8 8-10 hr, 35 km

Mountain bike 6-8 hr, Grade 5, Expert

It is a steady climb from the Avon Burn towards Mt Melina in Hāwea Conservation Park, reaching an elevation of 1500 m. Descend to Lindis River and on to Smith Creek before emerging at SH8 on the Otago side of Lindis Pass.

#### Pavilion Peak Track

Avon Burn car park to SH8 via Pavilion Peak Track 8-10 hr, 32 km

Mountain bike 6-8 hr, Grade 5, Expert

This track rises steeply to Pavilion Peak and then traverses along ridge tops to Dromedary Hill. Descend to SH8 near Dalrachney road bridge.



### Ben Avon easement

#### Birchwood Road to Ahuriri Conservation Park

30 min, 500 m

A short public access easement climbs through private farmland to public conservation land on Ben Avon peak (1713 m). Another easement links Ben Avon peak to Birch Hill.

#### Birch Creek easement

#### Birchwood Road to Ahuriri Conservation Park

1 hr, 2 km

A marked public access easement leads to public conservation land below Birch Hill and Puke Makariri.

### Ahuriri river easement

#### Ahuriri River to Hideaway Hut (historic)

2 hr, 6 km

200 m past the Birch Creek easement is an Ahuriri River access sign. 4WD vehicles can be driven to Ahuriri River on this short track (dogs must be confined in the vehicle). Park your vehicle and proceed on foot across the river. Head towards an old musterer's hut on the river flats, where you should come across a disused farm track that leads to a small tarn. From the tarn it is a short distance to Hideaway Hut.

### Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary

21 km along Birchwood Road is a scenic stopping point with seats and wetland interpretation panels overlooking Ahuriri River. Toilets are also provided here.

#### Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary to Ahuriri Base Hut 7 km

#### Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary to road end 12 km

### High quality water supports native fish

Clear, sparkling water from Ahuriri River and its tributary creeks host many native fish. Threatened species include upland longjaw galaxiid and bignose galaxiid while alpine galaxiid, Canterbury galaxiid and upland bully are also present.



Canyon Creek



## Birchwood picnic area

Drive through old sheep yards to reach Birchwood picnic area. Several farm buildings remain here from when Birchwood Station was operating. These include a two-bay horse stable, store shed and 1930s cottage. The old implement shed has been converted into a picnic shelter. If you wish to drive further up the valley you will require a 4WD vehicle.



Birchwood picnic area

## Snowy Gorge Creek

Cross Ahuriri River at a suitable spot to reach the open tussock valley of Snowy Gorge Creek. An unmarked route climbs steadily to the pass (1352 m) and descends into the beech-clad Maitland valley. Exiting out of lower Maitland valley requires prior permission from Lake Ohau Station.

### Birchwood Road to Snowy Gorge Hut

4-5 hr, 11 km



### Snowy Gorge Hut to Maitland Hut

4 hr, 9 km



### Maitland Hut to Lake Ohau

4 hr, 10 km



Snowy Gorge wetland



Scarlet mistletoe/pikirangi

## Upper Ahuriri valley



From the road end trampers, mountain bikers and horse riders can all easily access the upper Ahuriri valley. There are plenty of camping spots and three small huts.

### Canyon Creek

From the road end it is a short walk to Canyon Creek campsite. From here the tramping track takes you over a spectacular canyon and through beech forest. A lightly-marked route leads through an impressive gorge to the upper valley's waterfalls and grassy flats. A rock bivvy is nestled in glacial moraines below Mt Barth.

### 4WD road end to Canyon Creek campsite

20 min, 1.5 km

### Canyon Creek campsite to bushline

1 hr, 4 km

### Bushline to rock bivvy

2 hr 30 min, 3.5 km

### 4WD road end to Shamrock Hut

2 hr, 4 km

### Mountain bike

1-2 hr, Grade 3, Intermediate

Cross Canyon Creek and follow a well-formed track to Shamrock Hut. Be prepared to push your bike in places (washed out fords).

### Shamrock Hut to Hagens Hut

2 hr, 6 km

Mountain bike 1-2 hr, Grade 3, Intermediate

Trampers can avoid crossing Ahuriri River by hugging the true right riverbank. From Shamrock Hut the track descends gently to Ahuriri River. Cross the river and look for an old 4WD track marked on the true right with marker poles. This track provides a good riding surface for mountain bikers. You will need to cross the Ahuriri River again to reach Hagens Hut.

### Hagens Hut to Top Hut

2 hr, 4.5 km  
From Top Hut, in good conditions, trampers can cross the range into South Huxley valley or South Temple valley.

### Thriving vegetation provides a protective cover

Vegetation on the Ahuriri valley floor is a mosaic of wetlands, mossfields and short-tussock grasslands. Steep valley sides are covered in large stands of mountain beech/tawhai and edged with scarlet mistletoe/pikirangi, matagouri, snow tōtara and snow-tussock grasslands.

## Dingle Burn valley



A well-formed track rises 600 m from Ahuriri valley to Dingleburn Pass (1448 m). Snow poles mark the descent into Dingle Burn valley and to Top Dingle Hut.

### Ahuriri valley floor to Top Dingle Hut

3-4 hr, 5 km

From Top Dingle Hut it is a long tramp down Dingle Burn valley and out to Lake Hāwea (see Dingle Burn and Lake Hāwea tracks brochure).

## Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex



This area of wetlands and rolling moraines is near the end of Quailburn Road. Drive along Quailburn Road (north of Omarama), which becomes a gravel road after the Clay Cliffs turn-off. Continue over a small bridge; from here the road narrows. Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex is signposted and the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail passes through here.

## Quailburn Bush and historic site



This is an ideal location for a day trip or overnight tramping adventure and is at the end of Quailburn Road. There's a woolshed, sheep dip, homestead and



Quailburn historic site

concrete hut foundation ruins dating from 1866. A tramping track through beech forest crosses the Quailburn several times and leads to a viewpoint above the bushline. Trampers can carry on to the Ahuriri River East Branch and Freehold Creek.

### Quailburn historic site to Quailburn bushline

30 min, 1.5 km

### Quailburn bushline to East Ahuriri Hut (ruin)

1 hr 30 min, 4 km

### East Ahuriri Hut (ruin) to Lake Ohau via Freehold Creek

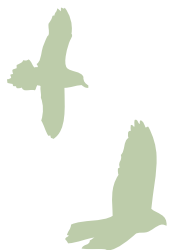
8 hr, 16 km

## Access

**Ohau Snow Fields road:** Permission to drive up Ohau Snow Fields road is required from Lake Ohau Lodge. Phone: 03 438 9885

**Maitland valley:** Permission to access the lower Maitland valley is required from Lake Ohau Station. Phone: 03 438 9663

**Dobson valley:** Permission to access this area via the 4WD track is required from Glen Lyon Station. Phone: 03 438 9644 or alternatively, 03 438 9642



## Track grades



**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.



**Route:** challenging overnight tramping/hiking.

Track unformed and natural.

Suitable for people with above average fitness. High-level backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills, required.

Track has marker poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.

Sturdy tramping/hiking boots required.

## Mountain bike grades



**Intermediate:** steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outer edge.



**Expert:** technically challenging. Giant climbs, narrow track and numerous hazards including dangerous drop-offs, sharp corners and difficult obstacles. Expect walking and possibly bike carrying.

## Hut grades



**Standard:** bunks or sleeping platforms with mattresses.

Toilet and water supply. 1 hut ticket per adult per night.



**Basic:** basic shelter with limited facilities and services. Free.



Descending into Ahuriri valley from Dingle Burn Saddle



Climbing Mt Barth



Horse trekking in the upper Ahuriri valley



Winter fun in Ahuriri valley



Ahuriri River East Branch valley



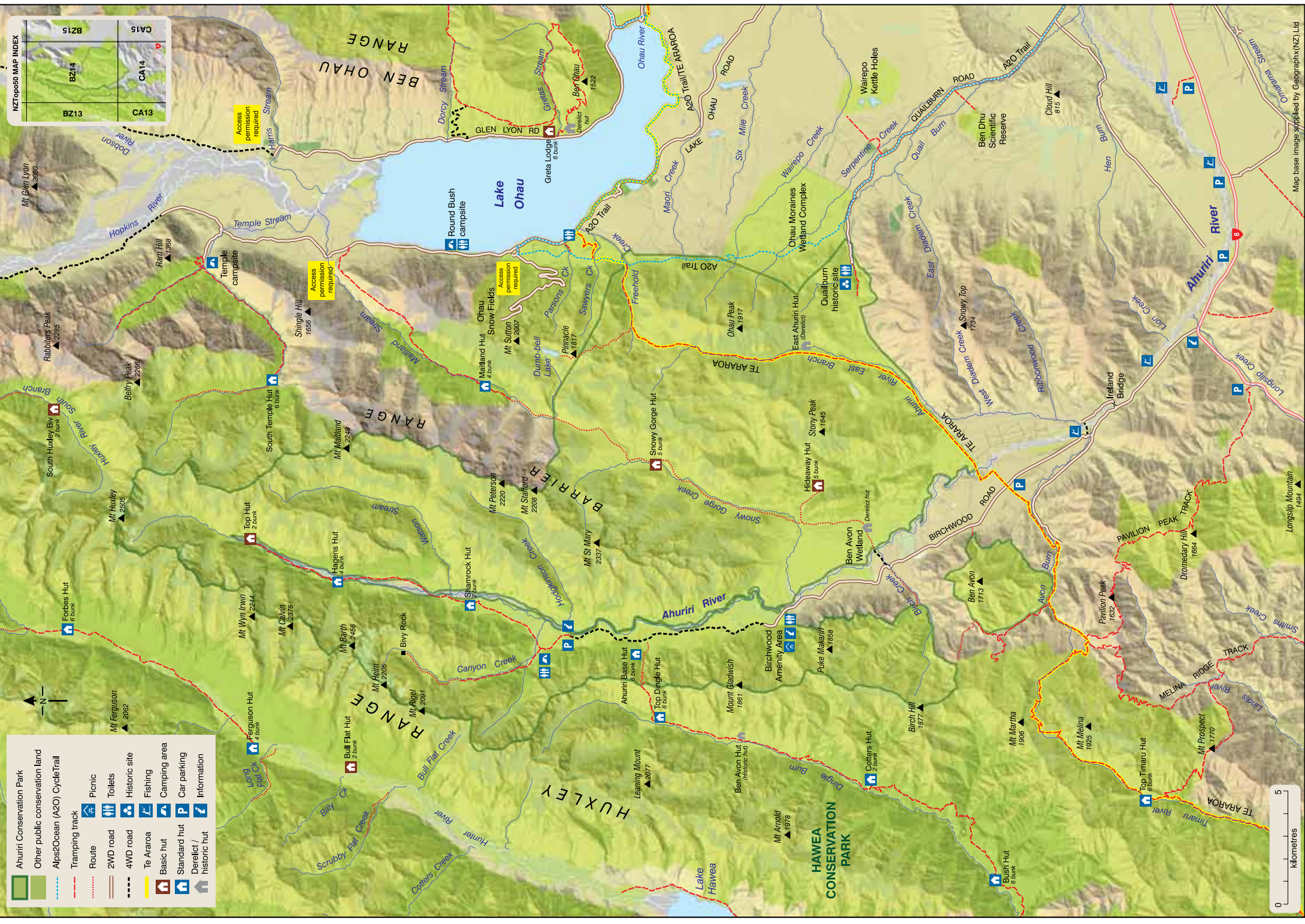
On the way to Shamrock Hut



Quailburn valley

NZ Topo50 MAP INDEX

BZ15	CA15
BZ14	CA14
BZ13	CA13



- Ahuriri Conservation Park
- Other public conservation land
- Alps2Ocean (A2O) CycleTrail
- Tramping track
- Route
- 2WD road
- 4WD road
- Te Araroa
- Basic hut
- Standard hut
- Derelict / historic hut
- Picnic
- Toilets
- Historic site
- Fishing
- Camping area
- Car parking
- Information

Map base image supplied by Geograph(NZ) Ltd

0 5  
kilometres