

## High Ridge, Tararua Forest Park

Although opportunities for camping along the ridge are scarce (due to a lack of water), an interesting weekend trip can be made using High Ridge to create a loop between Powell Hut and Tōtara Flats.

The loop starts with an easy walk from the Holdsworth car park following the Gentle Annie Track to Powell Hut. This gets most of the climb out of the way, and is a good candidate for a Friday after-work tramp. The next day, follow the track behind the hut onto the exposed tops and head in the direction of Mt Holdsworth. After 200m a large sign marks where High Ridge descends to the south. Leave the marked track and follow the worn footpath down the ridge, which drops steeply on the left. After a kilometre, stunted goblin forest rises out of the tussock. The entry to the forest is guarded by leatherwood that requires some bashing to get through. From here, foot trails with occasional markers lead through reasonably open bush.

The route follows the ridge for 4km of mostly easy travel to reach Flaxy Knob. Be careful not to follow one of the many spurs that lead off the ridge before then. An ancient wooden sign on Flaxy Knob marks the beginning of the steep descent to Tōtara Creek along the spur south of Red Rock Creek.

The worn route is partially obscured by dense undergrowth and is easy to lose, especially lower down. Do your best to follow it, however, as it offers a safe path through the web of kareao closer to Tōtara Creek.

Once you reach the wide Tōtara Creek Track, cross the swingbridge over the Waiohine to reach Tōtara Flats Hut, a perfect spot for lunch.

To return to the Holdsworth car park, simply cross the Waiohine and walk up the true right of Tōtara Creek for a kilometre. Take the bridge to the far bank where the track climbs the side of the valley to rejoin the Gentle Annie Track near Pig Flat. The car park is then an easy walk down the hill.

### Wild File

**Access** Mt Holdsworth Road

**Grade** Difficult

**Time** Holdsworth road-end to Powell Hut, 3–4hr; to Tōtara Flats Hut via High Ridge, 4–6hr; to Holdsworth road-end, 3–4hr

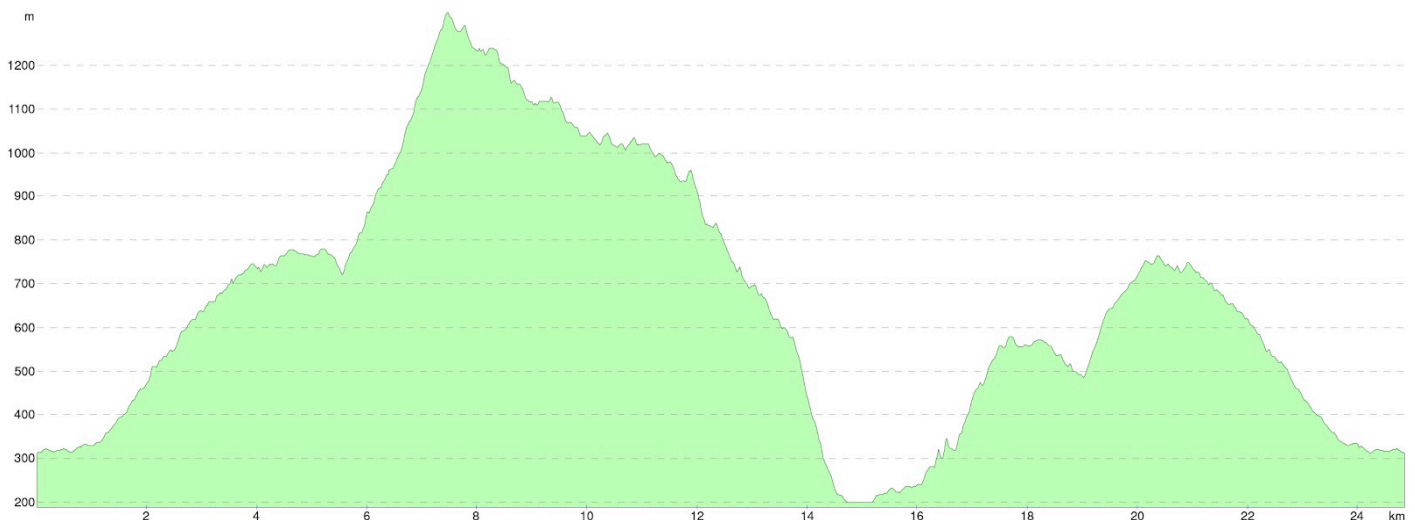
**Distance** 26km

**Total ascent** 2800m

**Accommodation** Powell Hut (serviced, 32 bunks), Tōtara Flats Hut (serviced, 26 bunks)

**Topo50 map** BP34

### Elevation



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