

Linda Woods Reserve – Some Suggested Walks in the Hills

1. Pink Trail - North Gate to Avoca South Gate via Ridgeline Track and Summit Viewpoint, return via Kahu and Jacks Tracks

2 hours return (in pink on the map)

Access: Carpark at Duncan Park, Port Hills Road, Heathcote. Follow the Duncan Park Track for 20 minutes through regenerating native plantings to the North Gate of LWR.

On entering LWR, go left through the farm gate then immediately right heading up the Ridgeline Track. It's a steady climb, but you'll be rewarded with spectacular views over the estuary, Christchurch City, Pegasus Bay, and on a clear day—the Seaward Kaikōura Ranges.

You'll have views into both Avoca and Horotane Valleys where recent restoration plantings are transforming the slopes into thriving habitats for native wildlife. Along the way, pass Gracie's Rock (a conical crag), and groups of ancient prostrate, divaricating plants including kōwhai, lawyer, muehlenbeckia, and matagouri before reaching the Summit Viewpoint. This is the highest point in Linda Woods Reserve at 410 metres elevation. Here, enjoy panoramic 360° views to Te Ahu Pātiki / Mt Herbert, Mt Bradley, Te Tihi-o-Kahukura / Castle Rock, Te Moenga-o-Wheke / The Tors, and Te Upoko-o-Kuri / Witch Hill.

Continue along Kahu Track through the silver tussock's towards the Summit Road and the Avoca South Gate. Here you can pause to enjoy views into Whakaraupō / Lyttelton Harbour and beyond to Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere.



View south to Lake Ellesmere from Summit Viewpoint

Return back the way you came several hundred metres and at the Ridgeline/Kahu Track junction, head north-west down Kahu Track through rich silver tussock grasslands. At the junction with Jacks Track turn right and head north back down the slope with views across Avoca Valley to Rapaki Track and the rocky

bluffs of Montgomery Spur. This will lead you to the North Gate, passing through Dam Paddock and above recent restoration plantings lower down the valley.



Dam Paddock alongside Jacks Track in Avoca Valley.

2. Green Trail - North Gate loop via Jacks, Kotare, Harakeke, Rapaki, Summit Road and Kahu Tracks and back to Jacks Track

2 hours 40 minutes return (in green on the map)

(Optional: return via the steeper, sometimes slippery, Ridgeline Track)

Access: Carpark at Duncan Park, Port Hills Road, Heathcote. Walk uphill for 20 minutes through regenerating native plantings to the LWR North Gate.

From the North Gate, head south-west on Jacks Track, gently ascending through Avoca Valley. You'll pass above a large area of recent native tree plantings, an emerging forest for birds to thrive in. Just past the Avoca Dam paddock, branch right onto Kotare Track, which follows down the eastern flank of the valley.

At the Harakeke Track junction, go straight ahead, up Harakeke Track. You will be walking through the future "Upper Avoca Bush" with waterway margin species in the valley floor grading into podocarp-broadleaf species on the slopes. At the top of the valley you will arrive at a gate where the track reconnect's to Jacks Track. Turn right here. Just past this point there is a spring above the track, fenced off from stock and planted in native wetland species.



View north from Jacks Track – Harakeke Track junction down Avoca Valley.

Continuing west along Jacks Track you will come to the sign indicating Rapaki Track to the left. Follow this across the paddock to the South West Stile, then onto Rapaki Track and walk 10 minutes uphill to the Summit Road. Here views open into Whakaraupō/Lyttleton Harbour and across to Te Ahu Patiki/Mt Herbert and Mt Bradley.

Head east along the Summit Road walking the crater rim of an ancient volcano, past the spectacular basalt cliffs of Te Ahi-a-Tamatea / Rapaki Rock and the craggy knoll of Te Upoko-o-Kuri / Witch Hill.

Re-enter LWR at the Avoca South Gate and climb Kahu Track a short distance to the Ridgeline/Kahu Track junction then head north-west down Kahu Track through rich silver tussock grasslands.* At the junction with Jacks Track turn right and head north back down the slope with views across Avoca Valley to Rapaki Track and the rocky bluffs of Montgomery Spur. This will lead you back to the North Gate, passing through Dam Paddock and above recent restoration plantings lower down the valley.

*Alternatively, at the Ridgeline/Kahu junction you could continue north to Summit Viewpoint then down the Ridgeline back to the North gate at Duncan Park.

3. Orange Trail - Rapaki Carpark Loop Circuits

Loop A: 1 hr 20 min

Loop B: 1 hr 40 min *(in orange on the map)*

Access: Carpark on Summit Road at the top of Rapaki Track.

From the carpark, walk east along the closed section of Summit Road—popular with walkers and cyclists. Enjoy sweeping views into Whakaraupō/Lyttleton Harbour and beyond to Te Ahu Patiki/Mt Herbert and Mt Bradley. Nearby are the volcanic crags of Te Ahi-a-Tamatea Rapaki Rock and Te Upoko-o-Kuri/Witch Hill. Ahead you see Te Moenga-o-Wheke/The Tors..

After 20 minutes, enter LWR via the Avoca South Gate and follow Kahu Track uphill through silver tussock grassland. Near the junction with Ridgeline Track veer north-west and down Kahu Track into Avoca Valley to the Jacks Track junction.

Loop A: Turn left (south-west) along Jacks Track, and follow the contour around upper Avoca Valley above recent plantings of podocarp/broadleaf forest. After approx. 20 minutes you will come to the sign indicating Rapaki Track to the left. Follow this across the paddock to the South West Stile, then onto Rapaki Track and walk 10 minutes uphill back to the Summit Road car park.

Loop B: Turn right (north) on Jacks Track and head downhill. After 10 minutes turn left onto Kotare Track and wind down into the mid valley. There are healthy remnants of mikimiki, matagouri and prostrate kowhai on the steep rocky crags here. At the Harakeke Track junction, turn right (north-west) and follow Harakeke Track beside the ephemeral Avoca Stream and new wetland plantings as it heads along the valley floor.

The steep bluffs and rocky overhangs to the west above the lower valley are known as Pari Rau-o-Marama (“grass skirts in the moonlight”).

Follow Harakeke Track as it swings uphill in mid valley to the West Gate, then walk up Rapaki Track to the Summit Road carpark to complete the circuit.



Looking west from north end of Kotare Track - miki miki, matagouri and prostrate kowhai remnants on rocky bluffs.



View looking east down Harakeke Track below the West Gate off Rapaki track.

4. Blue Trail - Horotane Valley – Avoca Valley Circuit via Castle Rock Scenic Reserve, the Bridle Path, Summit Road, Kahu Track and Jacks Track.

3.5 hours return (in blue on the map)

Access: End of Horotane Valley Road. Follow the narrow signposted track beside a driveway to the stile at the Horotane Gate entrance to LWR.

Just beyond the stile you will see native revegetation plantings begun in 2023, that mark the beginnings of ecosystem restoration in Horotane. Over the next ten years this should extend up the valley to the grand old ti kouka (cabbage tree) on the upper slopes.

Follow the track straight ahead then after a short distance turn left onto Jacks Track. Head north east up the track for 15 minutes around the lower part of the reserve to reach the Northeast Gate. You'll then enter Castle Rock Scenic Reserve.

This track continues north a short distance, overlooking Heathcote Valley before following round the contour to head south above Tunnel Road for 20 minutes, passing through 2–3 gates before emerging onto the lower Bridle Path Track. Ascend steeply for 30–40 minutes. Frequent stops to enjoy views over Christchurch, the estuary, Pegasus Bay, and the Kaikōura mountains offer perfect chances to rest.

At Summit Road, enjoy panoramic views over Whakaraupō/Lyttleton Harbour and to Te Ahi Patiki/Mt Herbert and Mt Bradley. Turn right(west) along Summit Road or the Crater Rim Walkway, the road is closed to vehicles but well used by cyclists.

This stunning 40-minute walk offers up-close views of Te Moenga-o-Wheke/The Tors and Te Tihi-o-Kahukura/Castle Rock. Continue past the Horotane South Gate and re-enter LWR at the Avoca South Gate.

Climb Kahu Track through silver tussock grassland to the Summit Viewpoint, the highest point in LWR (410 m). Take in the 360° views from/Lake Ellesmere to Pegasus Bay, then backtrack a short distance and head north-west down slope on Kahu Track to the Jacks Track junction. There are sweeping views over Avoca Valley to the Mt Vernon Farm Park and city beyond as you descend.

Turn right and follow Jacks Track down Avoca Valley to the North Gate, passing above recent large-scale native plantings, part of the emerging “Avoca Lower Bush”.

Continue along Jacks Track as it rounds the spur into Horotane Valley and passes through several more revegetation areas. Native podocarp/broadleaf bush is being restored to stabilise eroded slopes, suppress invasive weed species and “rewild” a landscape degraded by 150 years of farming. After approx. 20 minutes the track brings you back to the Horotane North gate to complete the circuit.