

TREETOPS TOP TRAILS

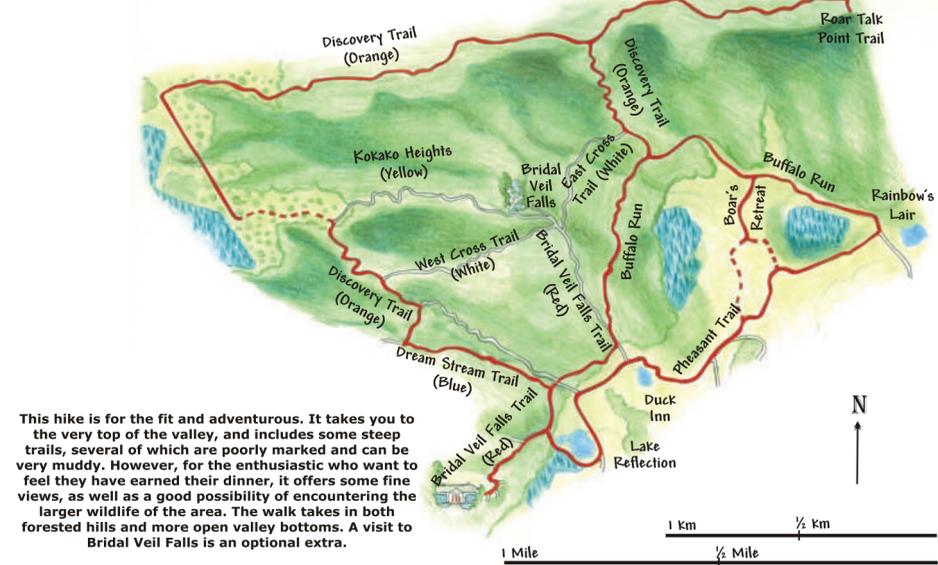
Over 70 km of trails wind through the Treetops Estate. On this spread we give detailed directions to the three most popular walks. Overleaf is a guide to some of the animals and plants you may encounter.

The guided walks are all circular routes, and vary in length from one to four hours (about 2-8 km / 1 1/2 - 5 miles). To help you plan a route that suits you the major features of each walk are given in the opening paragraph. Each walk is accompanied by a map, which marks not only the route described, but also any crossing trails. This enables you to easily shorten your walk should you so wish, simply by using

the map. It is also, of course, possible to go outside the loop of the guided walk, giving yourself a longer walk. A network of trails crosses the Treetops Estate, and you can easily cross from one guided walk to another, or plan your own route. A complete map of all the walking trails is also available.

We have graded the walks from A through to C, as follows:
A: Easy, with well-marked tracks and easy inclines.
B: Moderately difficult. May include some steep sections.
C: Difficult, with several steep sections. Tracks not always well marked.

Discovery Trail **TIME:** 3 Hours Return **GRADE:** B, C



This hike is for the fit and adventurous. It takes you to the very top of the valley, and includes some steep trails, several of which are poorly marked and can be very muddy. However, for the enthusiastic who want to feel they have earned their dinner, it offers some fine views, as well as a good possibility of encountering the larger wildlife of the area. The walk takes in both forested hills and more open valley bottoms. A visit to Bridal Veil Falls is an optional extra.

Starting at the far right of the lawn, take the path towards the **Glow Worm Falls**. Following the red markers, turn left at the first two intersections, and left again onto the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. The path descends steeply through a grove of mahoe trees, before levelling out somewhat to run downhill beside a stream.

Upon reaching the junction with the **Staircase Falls Trail**, turn right, and continue downhill on the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**.

At the **Lake Reflection** junction, turn left to continue on the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**.

Following the red markers, within ten minutes you will reach the trailhead of the **Dream Stream Trail** going straight ahead. Take this trail, following the blue markers until you reach the **Discovery Trail**. Enjoy the native bush and the sound of the stream. You will pass the **Staircase Falls Trail** on the left.

Turn left up the **Discovery Trail** which is marked continuously with orange markers. The wide, hard clay track climbs steeply. We will pass the **West Cross Trail** on the right. As we climb higher, don't forget to pause to admire the fine views across the valley. You may be able to recognise the more golden-green heads of the rimu trees towering above their neighbours at Captain Cook's Stand on the far side.

Eventually the steep climb levels out abruptly as we reach the gently undulating surface of the Mamaku Plateau. While you pause to catch your breath, look about you. To the right is the top of the **Kokako Heights Trail**, marked yellow. This could take you, in about 25 minutes, down to Bridal Veil Falls. (See Bridal Veil Falls walk for continuing walking options).

Ahead and to your left is a meadow consisting of grassland and scattered clumps of taller vegetation, often clustering around the stump of a long-dead tree, some of considerable size. A mighty forest once stood here. Over a century ago the land was cleared, firstly by milling then by burning, for farming. However, the volcanic soil lacked mercury and selenium, trace elements essential to livestock (supplied today throughout the Volcanic Plateau by topdressing). The farm failed and the land is now reverting to forest once more. But grazing by deer is preventing the regenerating forest from encroaching on all areas equally, hence the odd patchwork you see before you. Be warned: the area is quite extensive and forms a natural maze. Be sure of your direction before venturing out too far into it.

Follow the orange markers and move forward through the meadow. Make your way towards the line of pine trees to your left about 400 metres distant. Do not be surprised if you startle deer grazing amongst the bushes.

A fence runs along the boarder of the pine plantation. Upon reaching this, turn right, and follow it, through a couple of deep gullies for about 500 metres. The pine is called Radiata, but is actually Monterey pine from California. In their home country they are relatively small, slow-growing trees. Here, they reach full size in only 20 years, and are the mainstay of the New Zealand timber industry, grown in plantations such as this.

Where the fence makes a right angle turn to the right, turn with it, and continue along the wide path, following the orange markers.

The path follows the fence for a short distance, and then moves away from it. It is an ancient Maori track, centuries old, quite wide and deeply worn in places. Unfortunately it is about 100 metres back from the edge of the plateau, and thick vegetation prevents you obtaining a view. Note, among the forest trees, numerous young rimu. Perhaps one day the lost forest giants will return. Watch out for bush lawyer. This innocuous-looking vine is actually covered with thousands of minute hooks, which will entangle in your clothes and skin if given a chance.

After about 1 1/2 km (approx 30 mins walk) the **Discovery Trail** turns right off the main trail into the forest and down the bluffs. This is marked orange and is the downhill leg of the **Discovery Trail**. But first, take the extra 40 minutes to enjoy a spectacular view from **Roar Talk Point**.

Roar Talk Point (optional extra approx 40 mins return)
 Before turning down the **Discovery Trail**, consider continuing on along the ridge track, following the red markers, to the fine viewpoint at the end of the valley. Proceed along the track until you encounter a gate. At this point turn right and follow the sidetrack into the forest. Although narrow adjacent to the path, the vegetation soon clears to reveal a wide track that takes you, in about a minute, to the very edge of the Mamaku Plateau, **Roar Talk Point**. Be warned: the cliff at this point is sheer; while the view is unsurpassed, it is not for those nervous of heights!

After admiring the view, return the way you have come to the marked orange **Discovery Trail** down hill leg.

Main route

The down hill leg of the **Discovery Trail** is marked orange and begins at the intersection with the **Roar Talk Point** turnoff and follows down a ridge, projecting into the valley. As you reach the far end of the ridge, the ground starts to drop steeply, and the trail becomes clear, zigzagging downwards.

The path is generally (but not always) easy to follow. After about 15 mins it begins to level out. On the right you will pass the **East Cross Trail**, marked with white plastic triangles. If you choose to take this trail, it will bring you, in less than 10 minutes, to the main **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**, where you can turn right to reach the falls in a further five minutes. (See Bridal Veil Falls walk for continuing walking options).

Instead, we will continue on down the **Discovery Trail**, within a few minutes we reach a major track junction. This is the end of the **Discovery Trail**, and the 4x4 track, in both directions, is **Buffalo Run Trail**. The right hand path will return you to the lodge in about 30 mins; the left hand route takes about an hour.

Turning right (30 mins to lodge)
 Turning right, in about 10 mins, you will run into the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail** on the right. The first right leads up to the falls. Do not take the first right. About 40 metres beyond this the second right leads away from the falls and back to the lodge. Take the second right and follow the red markers down the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail** towards the lodge, and in less than 5 mins you will reach the **Discovery Trail**. Crossing the **Discovery Trail** and backtracking along your previous route will bring you to the lodge in about 15 mins.

Turning left (1 Hour to lodge)
 We, however, will take the left hand branch of **Buffalo Run Trail**. In about 10 mins we reach a gate. Pass through into the upper reaches of an open valley bottom. Walk quietly and you may well see wild pigs, deer or even water buffalo.

Ten minutes walk brings you to the **Boar's Retreat Track** to your right. This track is an option, although it is not clear after the first 200 metres, and you will have to make your way across the pasture by the best route until you encounter the wide 4-wheel drive road called the **Pheasant Trail**. When you do so, turn right onto it.

Alternatively, continue on down the **Buffalo Run Trail**, passing behind a small hill on the far side of which the trail meets the **Pheasant Trail**. Turn right and follow this wide trail for about a kilometer, past **Duck Inn Lake** on your left and the trailhead of the **Buffalo Run** on your right. Passing through a gate, the road soon swings to the left, just past an old orchard on the left. You will pass the trailhead of the **Discovery Trail** on your right. A little further on, up and over a bank on the right, **Lake Reflection** can be seen. There is a path on the right up onto **Palm Beach** once you reach the far end of the lake. Walk along the beach and continue on the path around the back of the lake, through a gate, and so back on to the red marked **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. Go straight ahead and continue up towards the lodge. You are now back on the same track you started on, and bearing left towards the lodge at the bottom of the **Staircase Falls Trail** will bring you back to the lodge within ten minutes.

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 We, however, will take the left hand branch of **Buffalo Run Trail**. In about 10 mins we reach a gate. Pass through into the upper reaches of an open valley bottom. Walk quietly and you may well see wild pigs, deer or even water buffalo.

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Starting at the far right of the lawn, take the path towards the **Glow Worm Falls**. Following the red markers, turn left at the first two intersections, and left again onto the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. The path descends steeply through a grove of mahoe trees, before levelling out somewhat to run downhill beside a stream.

Stairway to Heaven & Dream Stream Trails

TIME: 1 hour **GRADE:** B



This walk takes in a wide variety of habitats, from mature forest, including one of the few remaining areas of rimu forest on the estate, to one of the most picturesque streams. There is a great view from Captain Cook's Stand but the climb is steep. The walk remains within the forest throughout its length.

The **Stairway to Heaven Trail** is marked purple and starts on the far side of the road, across from the guests' car park. The wide path climbs steeply for about a minute before reaching a fence line. Turn right, and follow this. The track soon levels out. Note the large rimu trees scattered through the forest along the route. One has a large rata vine winding up its trunk; more about this later.

After about 10 mins, you ford a stream and shortly after reach a junction where the **Stairway to Heaven Trail** turns to the right. We will, however, continue straight ahead towards **Captain Cook's Stand**. This stand of towering rimu trees is reached after about 10 mins. Rimu is a major forest tree in much of New Zealand, and a popular timber tree. Large trees are rare in this valley, no doubt because logging has removed them over the past century (a number were milled to create the huge beams of the lodge). There is also a view over the valley from here.

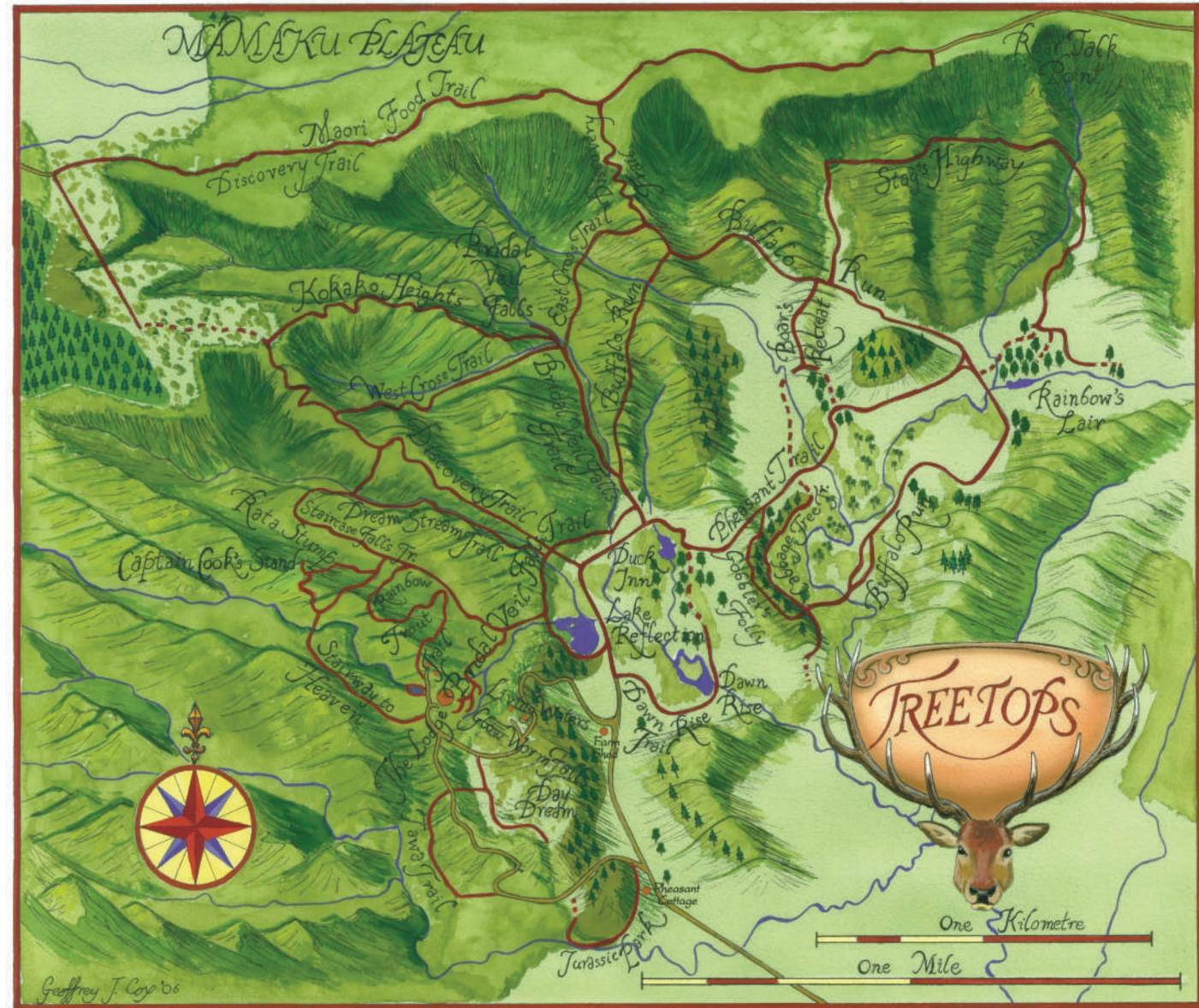
On the way back down, turn left at the **Rata Stump** turnoff marked red. Proceed down to the **Rata Stump**.

Rata starts life as an epiphyte, a small shrub growing high in the fine branches of a larger tree. Then it puts roots down the trunk of its host to the ground (remember the tree we saw earlier), the roots grow to encase the trunk, and ultimately the host is strangled and the rata, now a fully-fledged forest giant in its own right, takes its place. The original tree eventually rots away, so all old rata, like this one, are hollow.

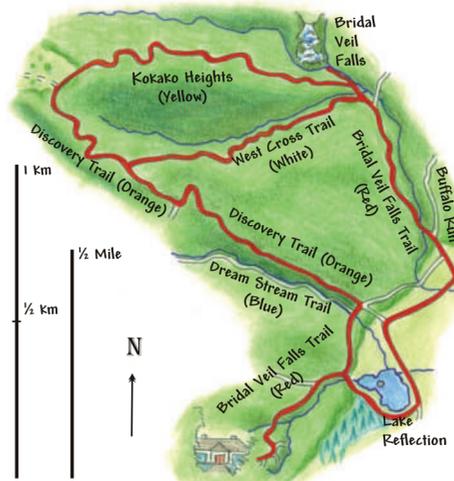
Continue down the trail by the **Rata Stump** back to the **Stairway to Heaven Trail** where we turn left and continue along it. Within a minute you will reach the intersection with **Staircase Falls Trail**. The path to your right leads down to the **Rainbow Trout Trail** on the right, which will take you back to the lodge in about 10 mins. We will turn sharply left and after a few minutes walk descend steeply on the **Staircase Falls Trail**. As you reach the valley bottom, a side branch to the left takes you up a short path to a position to view the **Staircase Falls**. After viewing the falls, take the main track downwards with the stream to your left.

Very soon you will intersect with **Dream Stream Trail**. Turn right and follow the blue markers through some picturesque bush, along the banks of a crystal clear brook. Watch out, however, for bush lawyer. This innocuous-looking vine is actually covered with thousands of minute hooks, which will entangle in your clothes and skin if given a chance.

After about 10 minutes, the **Dream Stream Trail** terminates at the intersection with **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. Continue straight ahead onto **Bridal Veil Falls Trail** following the red markers. **Lake Reflection** will soon be through the trees to your left and you will pass the track to the lake. Continue to follow the red markers up the hill. You will come to the **Staircase Falls Trail** marked pink on the right. Bear left, following the red markers. The trail climbs steeply through a grove of mahoe trees, before levelling out where it meets the track to **Living Waters**. Turn right, and follow the track up the hill, ignoring two paths to the left, the first to **Glow Worm Falls**, until you come out onto the lawn of the lodge.



Bridal Veil Falls **TIME:** 1 1/2 - 2 hours return **GRADE:** A, B



This trail has as its goal a visit to the beautiful Bridal Veil Falls. The return trip can be selected from a number of alternative routes, depending upon the fitness and time constraints of the individual. The walk is mostly within forest.

Starting at the far right of the lawn, take the path towards the **Glow Worm Falls**. Following the red markers, turn left at the first two intersections, and left again onto the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. The path descends steeply through a grove of mahoe trees, before levelling out somewhat to run downhill beside a stream.

Upon reaching the junction with the **Staircase Falls Trail**, turn right, and continue downhill on the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**.

Within a few minutes **Lake Reflection** will be ahead and slightly to the right. Take the right hand path, leave the red markers, go through the gate and this will put the lakeshore on your left. Note the long-leaved toe toe, with their white fluffy seed heads, and the taller, spiky-headed cabbage trees.

Lake Reflection is home to a variety of waterfowl, among them (introduced) mallard ducks and Canada geese, and (native) paradise shelducks.

Cross **Palm Beach**, and turn left onto the wide track down the bank on the far side of the lake. Follow the road up and past the intersection with the **Discovery Trail** to your left. Continue along the road to your right and pass by an old orchard on the right.

Pass through the gate and along the road for less than 100 metres. The thorny gorse bushes visible from the road may not look like much but are worthy of comment. Gorse was introduced from Britain to be used as a hedging plant. But in the warmer climate it ran rampant, growing into small trees up to 4 meters tall, as you see here.

Within 100 metres turn left on a narrower road, through the gate and on uphill. Ignore the first track on your left opposite the large radiata pine. Radiata is actually Monterey pine from California. In their home country they are relatively small, slow growing trees. Here, they reach full size in only 20 years, and are the mainstay of the New Zealand timber industry. Other prominent trees on this section are natives: rewarewa, putaputaweta and pigeon wood.

About 40 metres further on, at the 'Y' junction, turn left onto the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. Here you will rejoin the red markers. The forest is now taller, the dominant trees being mahoe, tawa and rewarewa. Following red markers, you will cross a stream, and the path will continue on uphill more steeply, and may be somewhat muddy after rain.

Ignore the **East Cross Trail** to the right, and shortly after, the **West Cross Trail** to the left, and continue on straight ahead.

After about a minute, take the right hand fork again when the **Kokako Heights Trail** branches off to the left. The path now follows a stream valley, and a further four minutes walk will bring you to **Bridal Veil Falls**.

While admiring the falls, you can contemplate your return trip. If you are short of time, or feel that you have had sufficient exercise for the day, return by following the red markers all the way back to the lodge.

For the more adventurous, you may take either of the last two side paths you have just passed: **Kokako Heights** and the **West Cross Trail**. Note that **Kokako Heights** is more strenuous than

anything you have attempted so far. Both meet again on the **Discovery Trail**, after which there are a number of opportunities for you to leave this guided walk and follow the signposted paths back to the lodge.

Kokako Heights (approx 25 mins)
 This trail is graded 'C'.

Follow the track back from the falls and turn right onto the **Kokako Heights Trail**. The kokako is one of New Zealand's most tuneful songbirds. It is also exceptionally rare, and the chances of encountering one on this trail are low. On the other hand you will encounter some lovely stands of tawa and, from the higher reaches, some spectacular views.

The path climbs at times very steeply. It is not always clearly trodden, so watch out for the yellow plastic triangle markers nailed to trees. Soon it is running along a ridge, and eventually emerges into a more open grassed area.

At the summit the path meets the **Discovery Trail**. Turn sharp left, and follow this trail. This meanders steeply downhill, once again affording some spectacular views. Eventually it passes the exit from the **West Cross Trail**.

West Cross Trail (approx 15 mins)
 Follow the track back from the falls, past the turn off to **Kokako Heights** and on to the second track on the right. This is the **West Cross Trail** and is marked with white markers. The track meanders through a grove of tree ferns, following a stream and generally climbing until after about fifteen minutes it meets the wide **Discovery Trail**. Turn left and continue down this.

Both routes
 Going down the **Discovery Trail**, about 200 metres beyond the junction with the **West Cross Trail**, you pass the **Dream Stream Trail** on the right. If you wish you may take this, reaching the **Staircase Falls Trail**, in about 5 mins, where you can turn right and visit the beautiful secluded falls or go left to follow the picturesque stream down to **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**.

We, however, will continue on down the **Discovery Trail**.

A further ten minutes walk brings you to a crossroads with the **Bridal Veil Falls Trail**. Ahead is a gate. However, we will take the right hand trail, and within a few metres will pass the lower end of the **Dream Stream Trail**. Turn left and follow the red markers back to the lodge.

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