

Websites

The following websites offer different perspectives on the Whanganui River, from the official to the not-so-official:

Official

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Explore/002~Tracks-and-Walks/Great-Walks/Whanganui-Journey.asp>

<http://www.riverboat.co.nz/>

http://www.rivernz.com/the_river_region/

Waitangi Tribunal decision

<http://www.bennion.co.nz/mlr/1999/jun.html#whanganui>

Personal

<http://www.riverboats.homestead.com/MainMenu.html>

<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~jim-p/wg/wgr.html>

<http://www.details.co.nz/wang-rvr/>

SPECIAL NOTE: We now have EFTPOS and Credit Card facilities (Visa/Mastercard only) but still accept cash or cheques



Scan to go to BP Online Booking System



Scan to go to BP YouTube safety briefing



web: www.blazingpaddles.co.nz

email: judithe@blazingpaddles.co.nz

Freephone: 0800 BLAZING (0800 252 946)

RD2, Taumarunui. 1033 SH4, Piriaka, 3992



INFORMATION BOOKLET 2011-2012 SEASON

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A very warm welcome...

Thank you for enquiring about a Whanganui River trip with Blazing Paddles.

We hope you choose to undertake this magical adventure with us.

Like everything, you always get what you pay for, and we are working hard to provide good value for money experiences without compromising your safety or enjoyment.

Over the past few years we have continually improved our fleet of canoes and vehicles, and ancilliary equipment and can now say, without fear of contradiction, that we are the best self guide operators on the river.

Our prices are competitive, and we are always prepared to negotiate special rates for groups of five or more, at off-peak times.

If you are pricing around, please, for your own benefit, check exactly what you are getting for your money. (Look at the Compare the Gear page on our website to see why we feel we offer

the best value for money on the river.)

There are major changes happening on the river and as a result we've had to make significant new investments in safety equipment and audits.

Perhaps the biggest change has been the move by DOC to drop their old all inclusive FUP and introduce a new online booking sytem - see page 10.

Meantime, please don't hesitate to call us on our toll free phone number 0800 252 946 or email us on judithe@blazingpaddles.co.nz if you require any further information or to make a booking.

Mark .

Mark and Judith Ebrey

Blazing Paddles Canoe Adventures.

"Arrive as strangers ... leave as friends."



Minnows are the way to go on the day trip.

What if we have no canoeing experience?

Many customers ring up initially asking for a guided trip, saying they have never been in a canoe before.

In fact, probably 90 per cent of our customers have never been in a canoe before, but they find it is not difficult and fully enjoy their trip.

Part of the reason why they decide to go unguided is the difference in cost.

While we know the guided companies do an excellent job, many of our customers are not prepared to pay the \$400 plus per person that a guided trip costs.

We give a full briefing on the river bank on how to load the canoe, and how to read the river and, no matter how many days you are doing, there is always a few simple rapids at the start to get your confidence up.

Being self guided, your only restriction is to be at the pull out place at the required time, but for the rest of the trip you can start or finish when you like and you are not affected by group dynamics.

During the season, there is always traffic on the river, be it other canoes or jetboats, so there is always help around in the unlikely event that you run into trouble.

We insist all of our customer take a tent, even if they have a confirmed bed in the huts, so if they do get stranded for any season, they have shelter.

When I canoe the river, I prefer to tent anyway, although if it is wet I will use the hut facilities to cook and eat in.

My rationale is simple ... a full hut in the height of summer is normally a very noisy place, and because it is hot, the windows are invariably open, letting in mosquitos and other nightlife.

I always carry a tin of flyspray and give the tent a burst just before I go to bed, in case a mozzie has got in.

Normally plenty of water

There is a campsite every two hours on the river and each has a water catcher/shelter that has large water tanks behind.

This means, unless there is a drought, there is always plenty of potable water available, so you only need to carry the water you need to drink during the day.

This water does not generally need purifying.

In times of drought, it pays to bring some form of water purification, because you will need to take water from the river.

Catch a cache...

The number of clients turning up with GPS units is growing, so we have including the GPS co-ordinates for all campsites and places of interest on the river, either on our maps or on a separate sheet.

Our driver Richard is one of those keen GPS cache hunters and he plans to establish one or more for you to find down river - if this is your thing ask about it when you check in at our depot.

What happens if the river floods while you are on it?

The Whanganui is an immense river system, draining 7500 square kilometres and it floods reasonably frequently from September through to December.

On rare occasions it floods high enough to require canoeists to stay an extra night at one of the huts or campsites, but generally the resultant high flows mean a quick trip the next day, so it is only on very rare occasions when people are delayed. (For example, the normal four and a half hour run from Tieke takes less than two hours when the river is high).

All of the rapids disappear but the river is normally safe to canoe on, so long as back eddies are clearly running on both sides.

It is never safe to go on a rising river, or when there is debris floating in the water.

If it looks as though there will be prolonged rain and the potential for the river to remain high, we recommend canoeists raft up for safety and we will arrange for a jetboat to follow you out, just in case.

Basically, if it is safe enough for a jetboat to operate, then it is safe enough for canoes, but canoeists should always take the advice of the DOC wardens or Joe Adam at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge about when it is safe to go on the river.

If the river is flooded, we remain in constant contact with DOC and Joe Adam at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge, so we can reschedule transport and make calls to let your friends and family know you have been delayed.

If bad weather is forecast, likely to cause flooding, we will not put people on the river.

But sometimes, the weather can be brilliant when you start your trip, and the forecast for

the next few days looks okay, then the situation changes and heavy rain falls, generally in the western rivers.

Customers who have paid deposits but are unable to start their trip because the river is too high will have their deposits refunded.

For those doing longer trips, often it is an option to start further downstream when the river drops.

Leave those cell phones behind

We now have Vodafone and Telecom coverage at our depot, but that's as good as it gets.

There is virtually no cell phone coverage on the river, or the access roads leading to it, so you might as well leave your cell phones in the car.

Personal experience has shown that they don't like water, so leave them behind.

If the worst does happen, the worst thing you can do is turn the phone on to see if it is still working - that will short the circuit boards out immediately.

The best thing is to take the battery out and leave the phone off until you can get it home and dry it out with a blow dryer or leave it in the hot water cupboard overnight.

We have managed to save digital cameras, iPods, and cell phones over the past season, but there is no guarantee that the blow dryer treatment will always work.

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Prices

The rates below include GST, and DOC's charges if we make the DOC bookings for you. If you want to make your own DOC bookings see a breakdown of DOC charges and what you need to do to book on page 10.

Day Trip	Duration	Adult Hut	Adult camp	Youth
Cherry Grove-Ohinepane	4-5 hours		\$80	\$70
Overnight trips	Duration	Adult Hut	Adult camp	Youth
Cherry Grove-Whakahoro	Two day	NA	\$160	\$150
Whakahoro-Pipiriki	Three day	\$255	\$220	\$175
Ohinepane-Pipiriki	Four day	\$265	\$230	\$175
Cherry Grove-Pipiriki	Five day	\$300	\$255	\$200

Note: Blazing Paddles reserves the right to change these prices at any time. You should check our website www.blazingpaddles.co.nz for current pricing, or call us toll free on 0800 252 946 for a no obligation quote. Discounts are available for groups of five or more outside peak periods (Christmas-New Year), all school holidays and long weekends).

What we provide

Old Town Canadian Canoes

2 people

- 4 x 54 litre waterproof barrels
- 2 x 15 litre waterproof barrels
- 60 litre dry bag for tent/thermarests
- Lifejacket with whistle for each person
- Bow and stern rope
- Ropes for tying gear in/cargo net to hold barrels in
- Full colour maps in map case
- Two paddles/spare paddle
- Knife
- Bailer
- Canoe guide/Safety instructions
- Basic first aid kit if you don't have your own
- Sunglass ties when required

Explorer Canadian Canoes

2 people

- 2 x 54 litre waterproof barrels
- 2 x 15 litre waterproof barrels
- 2 x 35 litre dry bags
- 60l dry bag for tent/thermarests
- Lifejacket for each person
- Lifejacket with whistle for each person
- Bow and stern rope
- Ropes for tying gear in/cargo net to hold barrels in
- Full colour maps in map case
- Two paddles/spare paddle
- Knife
- Bailer
- Canoe guide/Safety instructions
- Basic first aid kit if you don't have your own
- Sunglass ties when required

Note: Explorer canoes come with a centre bouyancy hatch in which drink bottles, sun block etc can be stored. These are not guaranteed waterproof, so they must not be used to store anything that cannot get wet.



Nantucket/Tui/Looksha/Loon

111 Kayaks

1 person

- As many dry bags as will fit within the kayaks for waterproof storage
- Lifejacket with whistle
- Spray skirt
- Bow and stern rope
- Helmet
- Full colour maps in map case
- Paddle/spare paddle
- Knife
- Bailer
- Canoe guide/Safety instructions
- Basic first aid kit if you don't have your own
- Sunglass ties when required

Minnow Kayaks

1 person

- Dry bag for lunch/personal gear
- Lifejacket with whistle
- Spray skirt
- Bow rope
- Full colour map in map case
- Paddle
- Canoe guide/Safety instructions
- Sunglass ties as required

It's all happening at Whakahoro!

We've previously advised people to avoid Whakahoro because of a 500 metre paddle up the Retaruke River and a 300 metre carry for all their equipment up to the Whakahoro Hut.

But recent developments by Dan Steele and his team have made Whakahoro a much more attractive stopover for those doing four and five day trips.

As well as Whio Lodge - a beautifully restored former shearers quarters (see map below right) - Dan has taken over the former Wades Outdoors depot and turned it into Blue Duck Central - a combined cafe, information centre and river safety headquarters open to all, regardless of whether you are staying at the DOC hut or the luxurious Whio Lodge.

The tariff at Whio Lodge is \$45 per person per night (\$30 for kids); and this includes transport to and from the river for both you and your gear; but the experience looks well worth the money - this is no ordinary backpackers..

To view the lodge and book, go to www.blueducklodge.co.nz/whio_lodge/en.

It's also possible to stay at any of the three lodges being operated by Dan - Whio Lodge, Blue Duck Lodge and Pinecones - on the night before you start a three day trip. We'll make sure your barrels are waiting there for you to pack so you are already to go when we come past with your canoes in the morning. The only downside is that you'll have to pay to have your car transported back out to Piriaka or Pipiriki for when you come off the river. If this appeals, call us for a price for the vehicle transfer.

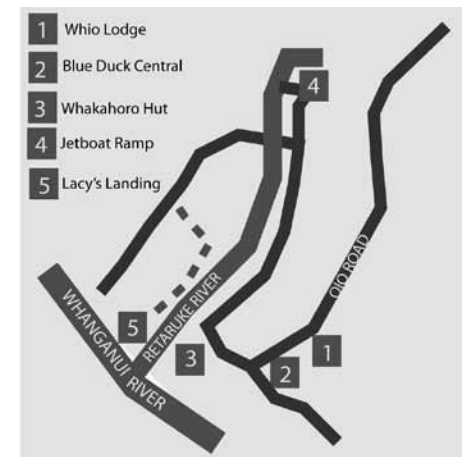
A night at Whio Lodge is also an option for those wanting a leisurely two day trip from Cherry Grove to Whakahoro. Normally you have to be off the river by 3 pm on day two,

but if you stay the night you can come in when ever you like. We will then take you back out to Piriaka around 10.30 am the next morning. The old shearers quarters at the home farm are still available too). Meanwhile, the Whakahoro Hut sleeps 10 in fine weather and up to 30 when it's wet; but has been converted into sleeping quarters only. You now have to do your cooking and eating at one of the two new shelters erected nearby - and hike across to one of the two long drops.

However, if you can't face the paddle up the Retaruke and the hike to the Whakahoro Hut, we recommend either stopping at the Maharanui Campsite above Whakahoro, or the Mangapapa Campsite below.

Maharanui is about four kilometres above Whakahoro and takes about three quarters of an hour to paddle, while Mangapapa is about an hour and a half below Whakahoro.

In the event that the river comes up after you have started from Cherry Grove or Ohinepene and the Retaruke River is running too fast to paddle up, there is an emergency takeout immediately upstream at the historic Lacy's Landing.



How to get away from those “madding” crowds

At peak times, there are a lot of canoeists on the river and, while you generally won't see them during the day, inevitably you will catch up with them at the campsites.

Our recommendation is to consider avoiding the John Coull site at peak times, because even though you can now get a guaranteed bed or campsite, it will be very crowded.

Guided tour parties generally stop at Ohauora, Mangapurua and the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge, but there are other options for self-guided canoeists.

Provided you are on the river by 11 am during daylight saving, there is enough time to go to the lovely Mangawaiiti Campsite, which is about an hour and a half below John Coull Hut. (John Coull is normally a six hour paddle from Whakahoro, so it will take you up to eight hours to get to Mangawaiiti.)

You might not arrive there until 7 - 8 pm, but it is normally daylight until at least 9.30 pm in summer.

It is in a gorge and the campsite is high above the river, but the path up is well graded and sometimes it is easier to pull canoes up and carry barrels up there than at some of the other campsites.

The only thing about Mangawaiiti is that is very important to pull your canoes right up to the top, because if you get unexpected rain, any canoes left down below will be washed away.

But, after a long day for your first day, you can make your next day only about four hours to Tieke/Bridge to Nowhere Lodge.

Or you can go on another couple of hours to the Ngaporo Campsite which is right beside the famous rapid, leaving you only two hours to paddle on your last day.

It's fun to sit on the bank and watch other canoeists tackle the Ngaporo, before you head off about 11 for your 1.30 pm pick up at Pipiriki.

If you think it is too long a haul to Mangawaiiti in one day, then why not add an extra day to your trip, and spend the first night at Mangapapa. This may be your only option in peak periods when the John Coull and Ohauora sites are full.

This means there is no hurry to get on the river at Whakahoro, with only an hour and a half's paddling on day one; six hours to Mangawaiiti the next day; and as above for the rest of your trip.

We only charge \$50 extra per canoe if you want to turn the three day trip into four.



If you want a bit of excitement you can always canoe over the lower Ohura Fall ... but prepare to disappear under the water as the canoeist in this picture has...



The famous Bridge to Nowhere.

What to bring

Per party

- Tents for everyone
- Gas cookers (one ring per billy)
- One large billy/pot per two people
- Wok
- Dishwashing liquid/tea towel/steelo
- Salt/pepper/sauces
- Matches/lighter/candles/firelighters
- Wooden spoon/food prep knives
- Serving utensils/fish slice
- Can opener/wine knife
- Water bottles
- Cards/frisbee
- Solar shower
- Cord for clothesline/pegs
- First aid kit
- Rubbish bags
- Toilet paper
- Torch
- Chilly bin/duct tape
- Solar shower
- Enough food for an extra day
- Binoculars
- Flyspray

Per person

- Warm sleeping bag
- Thermarest/sleeping mat
- Dry clothing for nightwear
- Woollen hat
- Clothes for canoeing in
- Sandshoes or cheap runners
- Knife/fork/spoon/mug
- Personal hygiene items
- Cheap sunglasses/bungee cord
- Raingear
- Book
- Camera/film
- Wetsuit for cooler weather/wet days
- Sun block
- Insect repellent



Having fun in the Autapu Rapid just above Pipiriki.

What to eat and drink

Travelling in a Canadian canoe does not mean going without.

There's plenty of waterproof storage space and modern prepared foods give you a lot more flexibility than the old days when freeze-dried and canned food were your only options.

Here are some food suggestions for each of the trips - but don't forget the extra physical activity and clean air will build up bigger than normal appetites.

One day trips

Pack a picnic lunch - sandwiches, rolls, cold chicken, fruit and a thermos of cold/hot drink, depending on the weather and time of the year.

Longer trips

Good breakfasts on the river are toast and jam/marmite or rolled oats (porridge) with plenty of sugar and milk. Some people prefer to buy the individual cereal packs and yoghurt for the first couple of days and revert to "hard tack" after that. Hot chocolate and milo provide an extra energy burst, except for those people who need a regular caffeine fix.

Pack a similar lunch for the first two days (wholemeal and other speciality breads will stay fresh if well wrapped). If time permits you can always toast the day two sandwiches over an open fire while boiling the billy for a hot drink (Fires only where permitted by DOC). Lunches for day 3 onwards can be crackers and cheese, but many people take breads like Reizensteins, which never seem to go stale.

Bananas are okay fruit for the first couple of days, but apples, pears and oranges are more likely to last the distance. Dried fruit makes a nourishing and energy-giving snack to eat while out on the water. (Our pigs just love soggy scroggin and we always get a lot left over).

Dinners come down to your own preferences and there are literally dozens of options to choose from these days as pre-prepared food at most supermarkets.

Pasta, noodle and rice dishes are very popular, but make sure you take enough. (Always expect to come home with some food - you'll need it on those rare occasions when the river floods and you have to spend an extra night camped up.

Handy hint

Think of a worst case scenario when choosing your food. What if it hoses down with rain and you are trying to cook for two over a single billy out in front of your tent as it is getting dark. It doesn't happen often, but, believe me, it's no fun when it does. (This is where a wok can be useful - you can cook a lot of food in a wok.)

Go prepared

For those who have the opportunity, you can do worse than follow my normal practice, which is to pre-cook mince, a casserole or sausage stew, complete with all vegetables and thickening, before I go. If you want to be extra efficient, I recommend pouring the cold meal into a plastic bag inside the billy you intend to use on the trip, and then freeze the whole thing.

When it is solid, take the bag out of the billy, seal it and then wrap it in tin foil and newspaper. You can transport it to Piriaka in a chilly bin, and such a meal only requires heating when you get to the campsite. Plus it has the bonus of being almost litter free.

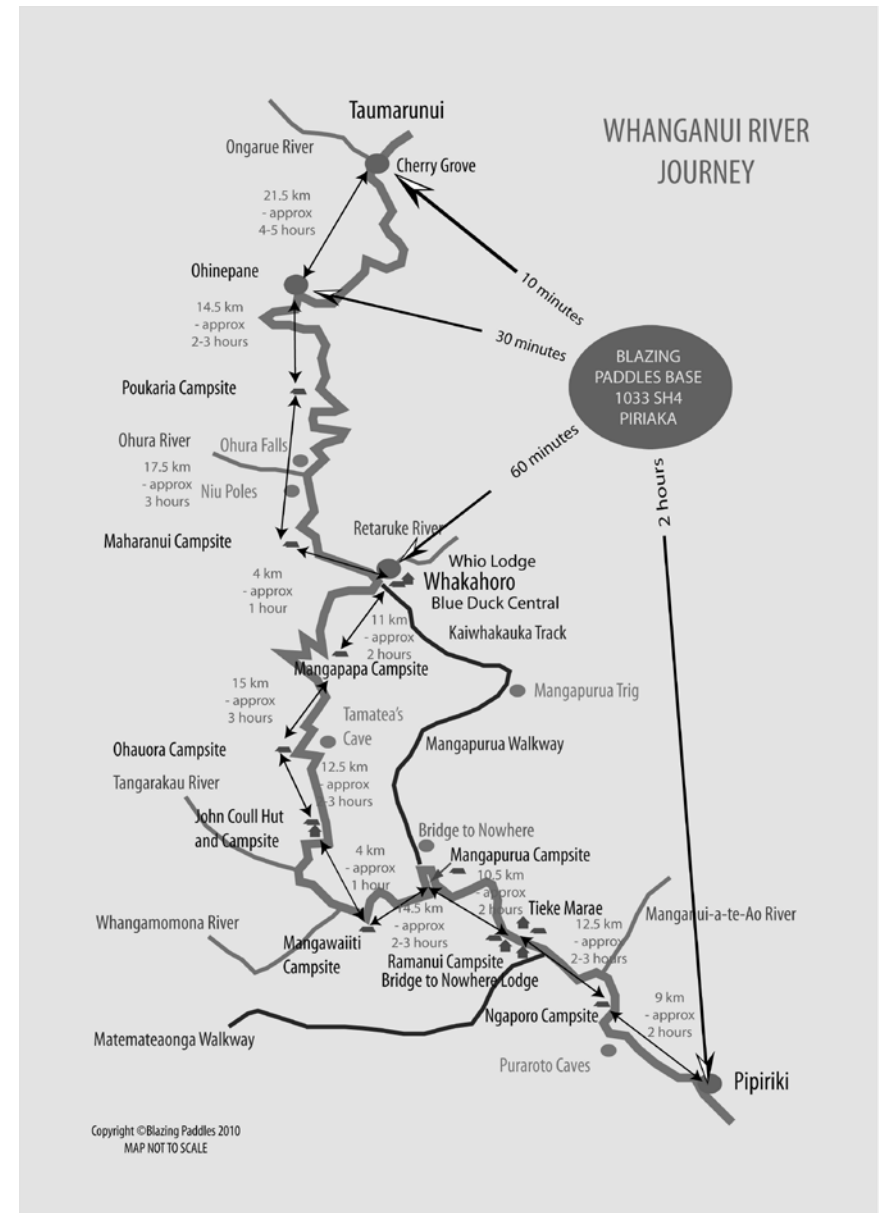
Snacks

Make sure you take plenty of these, especially if there are children/teenagers in your party.

Mini chocolate bars and boiled sweets like barley sugars are much better than scroggin in their opinion, which seems to be why our pigs get a lot of it.

Remember, a canoe trip will burn off all the extra calories...

The Whanganui experience



Which trip is for you?

One hour trip - Piriaka Power Station to Taumarunui Holiday Park

4 km - often shallow, but always lots of fun. Not suitable for children under 12. Can only be done in Minnow kayaks. There are a couple of grade three rapids that are a real buzz, and you will get wet, so dress accordingly. We pick you up at the finish and transport you to the start, so that when you are done you can just pack up and go - no waiting around.

Half day trip - Cherry Grove to Ohinepane

21.5 km - 42 named rapids. Best done in Minnow or Loon kayaks. Takes about four hours, so take your lunch. Can be done as a day trip from Hamilton, Rotorua or even Auckland, New Plymouth and Palmerston North with an early start and finish.

Two day trip - Cherry Grove to Whakahoro

58 km - includes all of the rapids of the first day, but also Ohura Falls and historic niu poles. Normally done in Canadian canoes.

Best campsite is Poukaria (6 hours), but it is possible to camp at Ohinepane overnight if late getting onto the river, however, it makes for a long second day to Whakahoro (7 hours).

Three day trip - Whakahoro to Pipiriki

87.5 km - the most popular trip. The first night is spent at John Coull Hut, while there is a choice of Tieke Marae and the private Bridge to Nowhere Lodge or Ramanui Hut (sleeps six and can be booked with Bridge to Nowhere Lodge on day 2).

Includes the famous Bridge to Nowhere on day two - a 40 minute walk in from the Mangapurua Landing.

Also includes the "big three" rapids on the last

day - Ngaporo, Autapu and Paparoa. However none are difficult.

Four day trip - Ohinepane to Pipiriki

124 km - Avoids the fun rapids on the first day, but adds the Ohura Falls and niu poles to the Whanganui National Park experience that starts below Whakahoro.

While it is usual to paddle up the Retaruke River to the jetboat ramp, with a long carry up the road to the Whakahoro Hut, it makes better sense to camp at either Maharanui above or Mangapapa below, if the weather is fine and warm. But check out page 21 for other options

Five day trip - Cherry Grove to Pipiriki

145.5 km - the ultimate trip. The upper two days offer an experience quite different to that from the more popular three day trip from Whakahoro, and are worth doing, if you can find the time.

Vehicle storage

We store your vehicles safely at our Piriaka depot, at no extra charge, and transport you to and from the river in our vehicles.

If required, we will ferry vehicles to Raetihi or Pipiriki at a charge of \$60 per vehicle. (Special note - this is at your own risk - our insurance doesn't cover it, but we only use drivers older than 25 who have clean driving licences.

There is little point in driving your own vehicle into Whakahoro, because we still have to take the canoes in, and then you have a problem getting back to your vehicle at the end of the trip.

Welcome to "Hollypito" and other classic film locations

During your trip with Blazing Paddles you will pass through or be close to the film sets for at least 13 feature films. This makes the Ruapehu District one of the most popular film locations in the country.

Everyone has heard of Lord of the Rings and many know that Mount Ngauruhoe is Mount Doom from the Fellowship of the Ring, but how many know that Peter Jackson was beaten to the punch by such cinematic notables as George Lucas of Star Wars fame and Happy Days Ron Howard as director who filmed many of the outdoor scenes from the 1988 cult fantasy Willow in the Tongariro National Park. Megastar Burt Reynolds came to New Zealand to play a cameo role in the Deliverance send up Without a Paddle; and there is a strong rumour that Robert Redford once canoed the Whanganui River on vacation.

What's with "Hollypito" - well Horopito featured in such New Zealand classics as Smash Palace and Goodbye Pork Pie, as well as providing one of the locations for the filming of a Maori village scene in the movie River Queen.

A number of New Zealand's biggest film names built their reputations with films made here. Roger Donaldson, Geoff Stephen, Geoff Murphy and Ian Mune all directed classics here, while Kiwi star Bruno Lawrence made his name in Smash Palace as well as featuring in Bridge to Nowhere.

For the record, here's the honours board for Ruapehu feature films

1986	Bridge to Nowhere
1988	Willow
2002	Pikowae
2002	Lord of the Rings
2004	No Ordinary Sun
2004	Without a Paddle
2004	River Queen



Last night options at the Tieke Marae

If you are ending your Whanganui River journey at Pipiriki, you have several last night options.

You can book a bed or a campsite to stay at the Tieke Marae campsite - see page 10 for the costs.

We provide a full briefing sheet supplied by the local people, but if you lose it, then follow the directions below.

When arriving at Tieke, you should wait a few minutes to see if anybody comes down to greet you.

If they do, they will explain about the protocol that applies, but in simple terms there will normally be a welcome ceremony and you will be expected to leave a gift (koha).

This is a gift from the heart and covers the hospitality you will receive while at the marae. (Our recommendation is that your koha should be a minimum of \$10-\$15 per person)

All of this will be explained to you by the person who comes down to greet you, and they will be your escort onto the marae.

Many clients describe their Tieke Marae stay as being a highlight of their trip.

If no one comes down to greet you, we suggest you call out from the river beach, just in case they did not notice you arriving.

If nobody does come to greet you then you can proceed up to the marae and make yourself at home.

Some of the facilities are off limits when the local people are not present and these will be locked.

If there are local people at the marae but you prefer not to take part in the marae welcome and activities, you can camp beyond the marae, where DOC has erected a water catcher and prepared tent sites.

Please be aware that Tieke is alcohol free, as are all marae. This means on the beach and in the camping area as well.

If you can't do without a beer or two, or glass of wine, we generally recommend people stay at the Ramanui Campsite opposite and you have full access to the bar at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge within walking distance downstream. You pay the same whether you go to Tieke or stay at Ramanui.

If you want to book the Ramanui cabin, call Joe or Mandy on 027 448 0308.

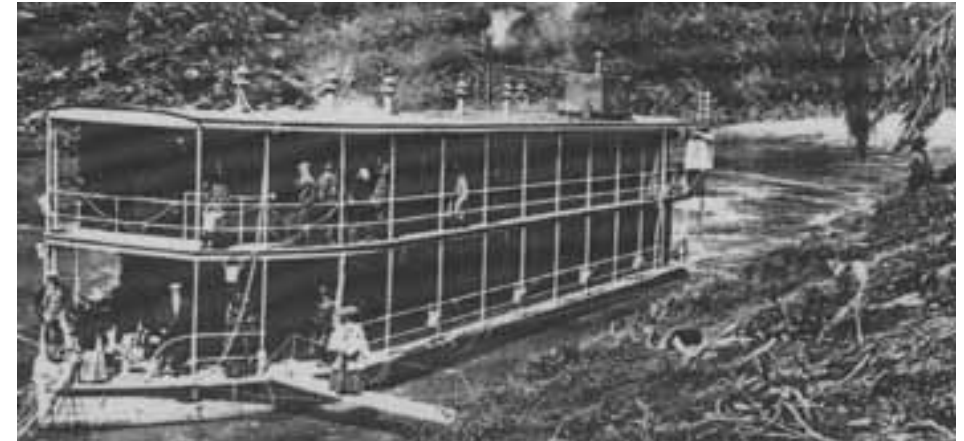
Special note: While there has been no Maori people normally resident at Tieke for the past couple of seasons, there will be a full time resident kaitiaki (warden) there this season.

Tieke is not available for public use during the annual Tira Hoe which takes place in January.



Taking the hard route through Towhenua Rapid.

River history



The Houseboat at Maraekowhai.



The first jetboat in 1959.



Pipiriki House.



Hatrick's terminus at Cherry Grove, Taumarunui. The riverboat is the Ongarue, which was on display at Pipiriki, but is now awaiting restoration in Wanganui,

River history



Children enjoying a river outing at Tawata.



One of the river boats approaches the Aukopae Landing.



The famous Bridge to Nowhere under construction.

Bridge to Nowhere Lodge worth a thought

Immediately opposite Tieke Marae is the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge and the Ramanui Campsite.

The 18-bed lodge operates on a self catered or fully catered basis.

We recommend early booking, because these facilities are very popular and they are also used by guided trips run by other operators.

Those booking the lodge on a self catered basis are expected to supply their own sleeping bag, towels and food.

The lodge is fully licensed.

Ramanui Campsite has a six bed cabin, plus a cosy shelter, complete with pot belly, barbecue, and plenty of campsites.

One of the pleasures of staying at the lodge, or the Ramanui campsite is that you will often hear the resident Kiwi calling at night.

There are also fallow deer, which sometimes come into the campsite overnight, and the big kowhai below the main shelter at Ramanui often has wood pigeons, tui and bellbirds in it during the flowering season.

For those of you who are into GPS caching, check out Joe's bar - there's a cache there for you to explore!

The GPS co-ordinates for this and other river locations will be provided with your maps.



Ramanui Cabin - it sleeps 6, has its own water supply, food preparation area, toilet and shower tent.



Bridge to Nowhere Lodge - a haven

The following charges apply at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge:

Self catering at the lodge ,
own food and bedding \$45 per person

Dinner, bed and breakfast at the lodge
\$125 per adult; Children 5-15 \$60.

Cabin at Ramanui \$15 per person

To book the lodge or cabin, call **0800 480 308**.



Equipment hire list

Blazing Paddles has the following equipment for hire.

Note some are available in small numbers only, so it pays to request them at the time of booking

Per trip

EPIRB	\$8 per day
Two person tents	\$15
Sleeping bags	\$8
Sleeping mats	\$2
Camping stove and gas	\$5
Gas ring and gas bottle	\$10
Three burner stove and gas	\$15
Cooking/eating utensils	\$5
Solar showers	\$5
Dry bags	\$10
Waterproof barrels	\$10
Maps	\$5
Chilli bins	\$10

What if you have your own canoes?

Any of the equipment above can be hired by those with their own canoes.

Clients with their own canoes, accompanying others who hire canoes from Blazing Paddles will be charged \$60 per person for transport.

Those simply wanting transport should call us for a quotation.

DOC user charges

During the season, from October 1 to April 30, the Whanganui River is classed as a "Great Walk".

This season, DOC is adding the Whanganui Journey to its Great Walks online booking system and everyone on the river will be required to hold a confirmed booking for either a hut bed or campsite for each night of their trip.

This includes youths and children under 18, although there will be no charge for them.

We are encouraging our clients to make their own online bookings with DOC and then confirm their canoe arrangements with us. At peak times (between Christmas/New Year, school holidays and long weekends, we recommend you make a pencil booking with us first and then confirm it after you have got confirmation back from DOC).

The link to the DOC online booking system is: <https://booking.doc.govt.nz/Menu.aspx?sg=WJY>

We do offer all inclusive prices as per page 3, but we have added a small surcharge to cover our handling costs and commission.

If you book direct with DOC then the following prices apply:

Ohinepane/Whakahoro campsites	\$10
All other campsites	\$15
John Coull and Tieke hut beds	\$31

For five day camping trips we suggest Poukaria, Mangapapa, Mangawaiti and Ngaporo campsites. For three day trips we recommend John Coull and Tieke campsites. If John Coull Hut and campsite are full when you make your bookings, you can still camp at Ohauora on day one and maintain the same programme.

Need somewhere to stay?

We have two bunkrooms on site, each with a double bed and two singles.

Our accommodation is ideal for those who expect to arrive in town late, after driving direct from Auckland or Wellington, for example. We leave the lights on and the door unlocked so you can just make yourself at home no matter what time you arrive.

You will not be expected to share a bedroom with strangers, but all other facilities are communal.

Charges are \$25 pp per night.

There are three other providers adjacent to Blazing Paddles that offer up market bed and breakfast or backpacker style accommodation.

Awarua Lodge is a very nice upmarket property for those who wanted to shout themselves (call Raewyn at 07 896 8100), while motel quality bed and breakfast accommodation is available from the Dicksons next door at 07 895 5889.

Just down the road is the Martins' backpackers, available by phoning 07 895 9066.

Following are the phone numbers for other accommodation providers nearby:

Taumarunui

Central Park	07 895 7133
Kelly's Motels	07 895 8175
Mahoe Motel	07 895 8988
Moyle House	07 896 6688
Tmn Holiday Park	07 895 9345

Owhango

Forest Lodge	07 895 4773
Maureen's Place	07 895 5947
Owhango Hotel	07 895 4854
Skipost	07 895 4846



There is a fully equipped kitchen and bathroom, that are shared facilities.



This room has a double and two single bunks. The other bedroom has two single beds and a double.

From page 14

How to pack your canoe

Be sure you need it!

One of the things that can spoil a trip is taking too much gear. Remember you have to carry it up and down river banks at the huts and the campsites, and if it has been raining, then sometimes this can be a bit of a mission. It is critical, too, that you keep most of the weight under or just above the gunnels, or your canoe can become unstable and tip over more easily in the rapids. Apart from a spare set of dry clothes and an extra day's emergency food, think carefully about whether you will use it or not.

How to pack your canoe

Old Town Canadians (Red)

The four 54 litre barrels lie side on in parallel in the centre of the canoe.

This means you must use either two or four barrels - an odd number is unworkable.

It is easier to carry four half-empty barrels than two full ones.

The yellow tent dry bag goes in behind the rear seat, while the smaller white barrel can either be placed there as well, or in front of the larger white barrels in the middle.

Explorer Canadians (Yellow)

The two 54litre barrels lie either side of the bouyancy chamber, closest to the rear seat.

The two smaller 15 litre white barrels fit in front of the two larger white barrels.

The dry bags are strapped on top of the barrels.

The buoyancy hatch on the Explorers is NOT waterproof, but can store anything that can be pushed through a C-DAX hatch cover opening.

Kayaks

It is easier, first up, to pack directly into the dry bags in the kayaks. That way you know everything fits.

Barrels

Provided they are closed tight, they will not leak. Remember to give them a tap shut with the palm of your hand before loading into the canoe. If you want absolute certainty, you may wish to put your sleeping bag and set of dry clothes inside a plastic bag and tie a knot to seal it. (Just remember that you will need to undo it, so don't make the knot too tight).

Your tent and sleeping mats do NOT go in the barrel. (Tent poles can jam the lid by getting wedged inside the lid handles).

Keep the weight balanced in each barrel so you have two matching pairs (ie two heavy, two light). If the barrels are not weight balanced it can interfere with how your canoe tracks on the water.

Cameras

Cameras are safe in smaller versions of the storage barrels. While dry bags should keep the camera dry, they provide minimal crush protection in the event of a capsized.

Dry Bags

These do stay dry if they are closed correctly. It is critical that you fold the top of the bag between the double yellow lines before rolling the top down further and snapping the catches together.

When sealed properly, you should be able to push down on the dry bag and compress the air within. If air leaks out, it is not sealed. **Please avoid putting sharp objects into dry bags, or longer items that make it impossible to close the bag properly.**

Other storage

Use our storage wherever possible, and ask for extra bags if required. We do have a number of storage bags for oversize items or cooking equipment.

Remember everything needs to be tied into the canoe, so bags with handles are preferable – and don't over pack any bag. Supermarket bags are hopeless, particularly if they are heavy. Ask for a polypropylene sack to put any plastic bags inside.

Chilli bins and other rigid containers

The object is to keep as much weight below the gunnels, and often it is not easy to firmly tie in rigid containers such as chilli bins.

You can fit smaller chilli bins in front of the barrels in an Old Town Canadian, but they are not easy to attach in an Explorer with a buoyancy hatch.

If you do take a chilli bin, it pays to duct tape it closed, rather than rely on the normal catches. Make sure you take enough duct tape to reclose it each morning before setting off on the river again.

Timetables to and from

Because of the distance to travel by vehicle and the fact that it is a six hour paddle to John Coull Hut, we generally expect three day trippers to arrive at our Piriaka Depot no later than 8.00 am to pack for a 9.00 am departure for Whakahoro.

The drive in takes about an hour and, depending on how much activity is taking place on the Whakahoro boat ramp, most people are on the river by 11 am at the latest.

Those doing all other trips are requested to arrive at 9 am to pack for a 10.00 am departure.

Pick ups at Ohinepane and Whakahoro after the half and two day trips are at 3 pm or by arrangement

Pick up at Pipiriki after the 3, 4 and 5 day trips is at 1.30 pm. If you get into Pipiriki by noon, you can walk up the hill to the takeway bar operated by Whanganui River Adventures and get a coffee or a hot feed.

We can arrange for vehicles to be ferried to Raetihi for customers travelling south. The current charge for this is \$60 per vehicle to cover the driver's wages.



Groups best kept small

Our vehicles (above) take 4, 11 and 14 passengers respectively, so we can accommodate up to 29 people in our own transport. Should there be more people than this, we hire in transport from Dempsey Buses. However, the larger the group, the slower it is. We recommend limiting your group size to no more than 14 (in seven Canadian canoes). Any more results in the group being spread out by more than a kilometre on the river and adds at least an hour to each leg paddling time. This is frowned upon by Maritime New Zealand and SAR.

It is a big help if group leaders collect payment from other party members before arriving at our depot. While this is not essential, you can imagine how long it takes to collect individual payments from a lot of people, particularly if they all want change. We recommend you also download the departure form from our website and prefill in the personal details on the back.

Remember, while we have credit card or EFTPOS facilities, cash, personal or travellers cheques are preferred.



This party was often spread out over two kilometres.

Where to find us

Blazing Paddles is based at Piriaka 10 kilometres south of Taumarunui on SH4 towards National Park.

