

The **ABC**  
of Sixtus Lodge



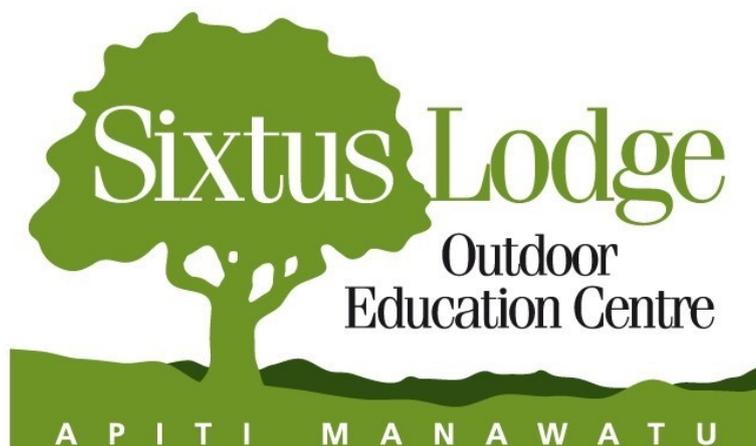
A P I T I M A N A W A T U

318 Limestone Road via Table Flat Road

Apiti, Manawatu

[www.sixtuslodge.co.nz](http://www.sixtuslodge.co.nz)

2021



**Sixtus Lodge** is 80 kilometres north-east of Palmerston North, in the foothills of the Western Ruahine Ranges, where farmland gives way to native bush. The Outdoor Education Centre was built in 1977 and named after the late Les Sixtus, a local farmer, who generously donated six hectares of his land so that **“urban children could get to know nature and experience the bush and the mountains”**.

The **Main Lodge** building sleeps 47 in two large and two small rooms that flank each side of the lounge/dining room. The bathrooms and toilets are off the main sleeping rooms. There is a fully-equipped kitchen with a large storage pantry, along with laundry facilities and a drying room.

**Toka Cottage** is adjacent to the main building and has its own kitchen, fully accessible bathrooms, and four single beds. Other buildings on the property include an all-purpose building (the Ngamoko Room), a wood shed and a utilities shed.

Surrounding the Lodge buildings are attractive lawns, an arboretum of native trees, and a bush reserve with a number of walking tracks leading to a nearby creek.

**Sixtus Lodge**  
**318 Limestone Road via Table Flat Road**  
**Apiti, Manawatu**  
**[www.sixtuslodge.co.nz](http://www.sixtuslodge.co.nz)**





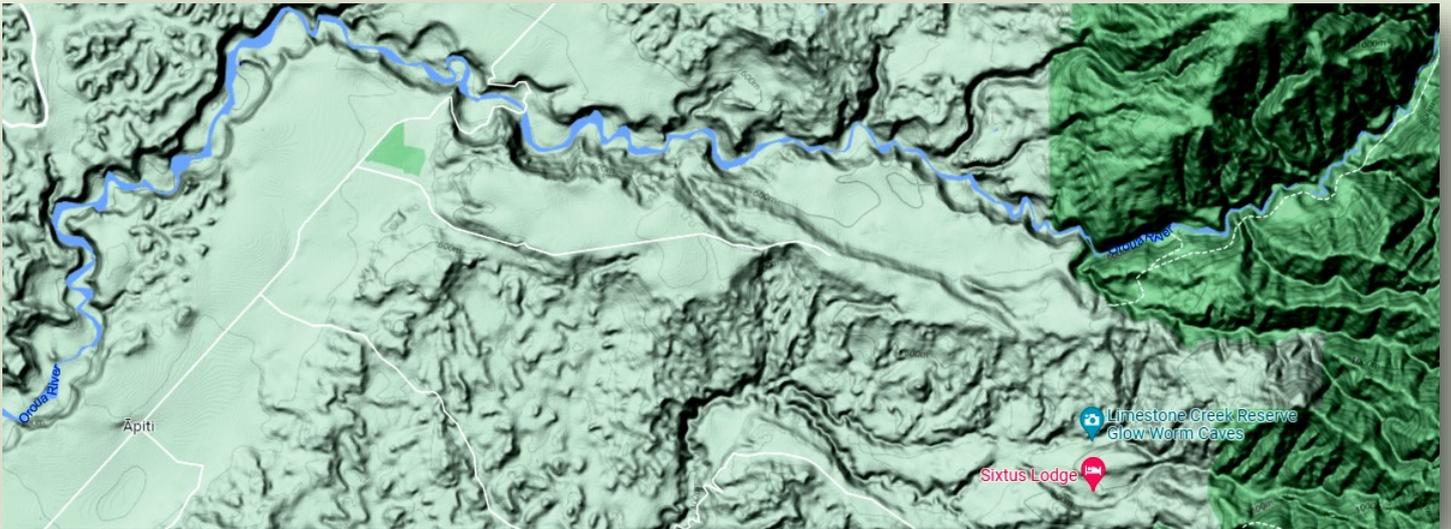
**Sixtus Lodge is very close to the Ruahine Forest Park and its stunning location makes it the ideal base for a wide range of outdoor activities and tramping.**



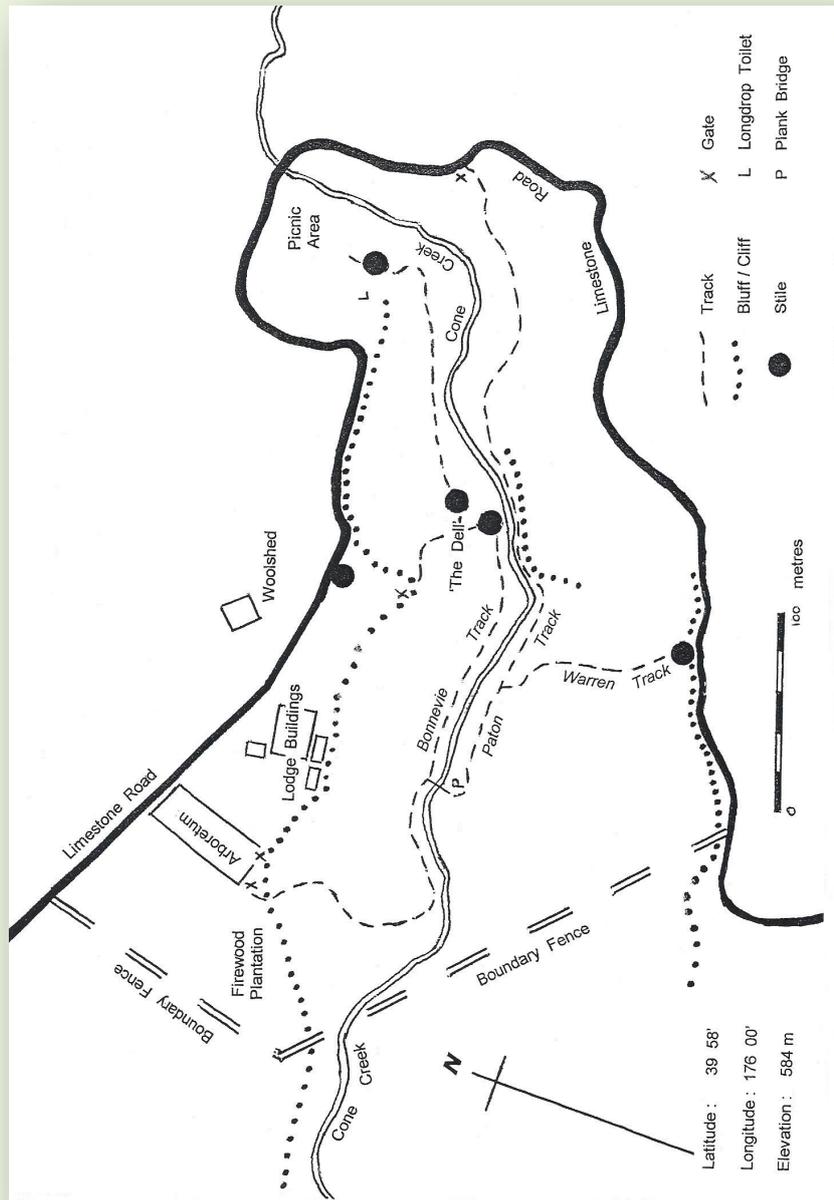
# SIXTUS LODGE TOPO MAP

318 Limestone Road via Table Flat Road, Āpiti, Manawatu

-39.97773422080599, 176.00572520644707



## SIXTUS LODGE PROPERTY



# A

**Abseiling:** Unfortunately there are no suitable areas in the Lodge grounds.

**Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge:** See Appendix.

**Alpine Flowers:** A number of interesting alpine species can be found in the tussock zone above the bush-line (about 1000m) including gentians, mountain daisies, *Hebe* species, eyebrights, edelweiss, the curious “vegetable sheep” (*Raoulia*) and spiky “Spaniards” or speargrass (*Aciphylla*).

**Āpiti:** A township in the small rural community situated some 20 kilometres south-west of the Lodge and about 60 kilometres north of Palmerston North.

- Āpiti School, Bryce Street; phone 06 328 4884
- Āpiti Museum, Oroua Valley Road, Apiti

**Ivan George produced a history of the area in his 1977 book “Apiti! Where’s That?” (available from Feilding Library).**

**The “Iron Gates Experience” website offers tourist information about the region.**

Visit [www.irongates.co.nz](http://www.irongates.co.nz)

**Arboretum:** The ‘Margot Forde Arboretum’ borders the playing field immediately west of the main Lodge building. It was established by Margot Forde, a founding member of the Trust Board, to display many major native tree species in one location. There is a loop track through the Arboretum with a number of trees signposted, and a detailed map is available at the Lodge.

**Arch Bridge:** See Appendix.

**Art:** The Ngamoko Room has benches and water available, making it a very good venue for making art work.

**Astronomy Study:** In clear weather, the night sky at Sixtus Lodge provides a spectacular vista which many will not have seen before. Look out for satellites (fast moving and usually from west to east) and distinguish between planets (a steady light) and stars (that twinkle). Also, find the Southern Cross and the two Pointers nearby. Note: The orientation of the cross will alter during the night.

## B

**Bark Rubbings:** This method is a good art expression for class activities. Place a sheet of paper over the bark and rub over with the flat surface of a crayon.

**Basketball Hoop:** Situated on the concrete pad behind the Ngamoko Room.

**Barbecue:** Sixtus Lodge has a gas barbecue—but tenants need to supply the gas bottle and utensils. There is also a large, cast-iron wood-fired barbecue in the east corner of the adventure play area.

**Bird Life:** When out and about, the bird life you are most likely to encounter would be bellbirds (korimako), fantails (piwakawaka), grey warblers (riroriro), harrier hawks (kahu), morepork (ruru), tomtits (miromiro), wood pigeons (kereru), and tui. On nearby farmland, paradise ducks and pheasants can be seen and further afield, in higher mountain steam areas, the rare blue duck (whio) has been seen.

**Bookings:** To secure accommodation at Sixtus Lodge, book online at [www.sixtuslodge.co.nz/Bookings](http://www.sixtuslodge.co.nz/Bookings) For additional information, contact the Booking Secretary directly by email: [bookings@sixtuslodge.co.nz](mailto:bookings@sixtuslodge.co.nz) or by phone (the number is on the website).

**Bush:** Sixtus Lodge Outdoor Education Centre is 80 kilometres from Palmerston North in the foothills of the Ruahine Ranges, where farmland gives way to native bush. Its location makes the area an excellent venue to study upland vegetation— as it was and as it has been modified by man.

For a study of the natural flora of the area, **Knight's Track** would be a good starting point (see Appendix). There is a good mix of beech and podocarp forest (including matai, miro, rimu and totara) at its lower altitudes and this steadily gives way to forest dominated by the *Cupressaceae* family (notably mountain cedar) and, at even higher altitudes by the *Olearia* (leather leaf) family. The latter begins to dominate above around 1150 metres and this in turn gives way to a band of hebes and other small shrubs until, towards the summit, the tussock takes over.

The altitudinal limits of a number of common species (for example bush lawyer, red beech, matai, miro, horopito and crown fern) are reached along this track.

The forest around **Shorts' Track**, on the other hand, has been extensively modified over the last century. Fire and introduced animals have played their part in this but, of greater significance perhaps, is the bush felling which took place many years ago. There are signs of this near the junction of the **Shorts'** and **Deerford Tracks** and, in fact, there used to be a sawmill situated on a flat below the junction. A few metres up **Shorts' Track** from the junction, traces of two hauler lines are still visible.

## C

### **Camping:**

- Lodge fields are suitable for tenting.
- There is a picnic area near the bridge (approximately 200 metres past the Lodge on Limestone Road) which also is suitable for camping. There is a long-drop toilet nearby.

**Caves:** See Glow-worm Caves.

**Challenge Course:** Situated at the east end of the Lodge grounds.

- Currently there are nine activities established
- A description of the course is in a green folder on the Lounge cabinets
- Adult supervision is necessary for some stations
- Equipment (ropes and planks) is stored in the mop shed and beside the tool shed.

### **Checklist for Tenants at Sixtus Lodge:**

For tasks and reminders regarding Arrival and Departure at Sixtus Lodge, please see "[Tenant Information](#)" on the website.

**Coal Creek (Makiekie):** See Appendix.

**Concrete Wall:** The concrete wall and pad behind the Ngamoko Room can be used for a variety of games.

**Cone Creek:** See Appendix.

## D

**Deerford Track:** See Appendix.

**Dell:** With its almost ethereal atmosphere, **The Dell** was once an attractive spot for quiet reflection. Sadly though, a vicious storm in August 2008 left a trail of destruction with many trees being uprooted and now it is a mere shadow of its former self. However, a number of mature trees remain, with regenerating understorey, and it is an attractive spot to visit.

The path to The Dell remains the shortest route to the gully from the Lodge buildings. Access is as follows: through the little gate in the southeast corner (beyond the climbing wall in the Challenge Course), a steep flight of steps leads down through The Dell to Cone Creek. From here, tracks wind along the base of the cliff to the boundaries of the property - **Bonnevie Track** on the Lodge side of the creek and **Paton and Warren Tracks** on the other (please see the Sixtus Lodge Property map on page 4).

**Diagonal Track:** See Appendix.

**Dogs:** Prohibited on Sixtus Lodge property.

**Dormitories:** The dormitories are for sleeping in and group leaders are asked to discourage boisterous activity in them. Also, food should be neither kept nor consumed in them. At night the external doors to the dormitories should be kept closed. Possums may enter and cause significant injury.

## E

**Electricity:** The switchboard is on the wall of the covered way outside the girls' ablution area. **Turn the MAIN switch on when you arrive and off when you leave.** MAIN switch in the OFF setting turns off everything *except* the freezer, refrigerator, smoke alarms and emergency lighting. **PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH THE MASTER SWITCH.**

Circuit breakers, fuses and fuse wire are located in the switchboard. If fuses or circuit breakers cut out again after being reset, a fault is indicated. Please advise the Booking Officer as soon as possible.



**Easy bush walks or more challenging tramps  
are all within easy reach of Sixtus Lodge.**



**Emergencies:** For any problems with the Lodge utilities (e.g. water, sewerage, etc), phone one of the numbers listed on the notice 'Emergency Details' which is affixed to the wall above the phone in the pantry.

**Entry to the Ruahine Forest Park and the Deerford Track:**

- From the Department of Conservation carpark at the end of Limestone Road, follow the poled route across farmland to the forest edge.
  - Walk down to cross Makiekie (Coal) Creek for the first time. Depending on the amount of rain, you may end up with wet feet at the crossing. The track then climbs steeply for a short time onto a river plateau.
  - Continue to the track junction - take the left track (**Deerford Track**) and, after a further 20 minutes walking, meet Makiekie (Coal) Creek for the second time. This is an ideal spot for a picnic and a paddle.
  - Return the same way or take the **Diagonal Loop**, just before the creek, up a steep climb to join **Shorts' Track** coming down from the tops. Follow this back out to the main junction.
- Allow 3 - 4 hours if doing the whole circuit.

## F

**Faulty Equipment:** Please report any damaged or faulty equipment. Record this on the checklists provided or telephone one of the numbers on the list by the telephone in the pantry.

**Fences:** Use stiles when crossing fences. If there is no stile, the property on the other side should not be entered.

**Ferns:** There is a great variety in the Forest Park.

**Fire: TOTAL FIRE BAN AREA**

**Firearm Safety:** No rifles or guns allowed on the Sixtus Lodge property.

**Fireworks: NO FIREWORKS AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR:** due to the fire risk and potential to frighten our neighbour's horses and livestock.

**First-time Users of Sixtus Lodge:** see '[Tenant Information](#)' on the website.

**Flax:** Various species can be found in the area and are useful for study or art and craft projects. Do not over-harvest one plant.

## G

**Gates:** Ensure the road gates to the Lodge site are shut and latched at all times. Keep all other gates on the property latched also.

**Glow-worms (puratoke, titiwai):** Glow-worms (*Arachnocampa luminosa*) are the larval stage of a small, flying fungus gnat endemic to New Zealand and are found in local caves. PLEASE do not try to capture or remove the worms.

**Glow-worm Caves:** The caves are found near the road about one kilometre before reaching the Lodge (watch for the roadside sign to the track leading down to Limestone Creek). After a five minute walk upstream you will come to the entrance of the caves. Once inside the cave, a good showing of glow-worms, both from above and on the cave walls, makes the journey well worthwhile. Glow-worms also can be seen on the bank to the right before entering the cave. See Appendix.

**Grassland Studies:** If digging is involved, use the rough paddock on the Lodge property immediately west of the Arboretum – worms, grass grubs, wireworm and various beetles may be found.

## H

### Heating:

- Main lounge: There is a very good wood-burner provided in the Lodge lounge. For efficient use of the wood-burner, see the operating instructions on the lounge wall. Firewood for the wood-burner is provided in the shed in the breezeway or in the open shed at the back of the Ngamoko Room.
- Toka cottage: Electric heaters are provided.

**Heritage Lodge:** See 'Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge' in the Appendix.

**Horse Rides:** Table Flat Horse Treks are located across the road from Sixtus Lodge.

For further information go to: [www.tableflattrekking.co.nz](http://www.tableflattrekking.co.nz)

## I

**Important Information for the Designated Camp Leader/Organiser on Camps at the Sixtus Lodge Outdoor Education Centre:** Please view the green clearfile on the shelf above the telephone.

**Information for Tenants at Sixtus Lodge:** see [‘Tenant Information’](#) on the website.

**Insects:** Many species to be found including stick insects, ghost/puriri moths, red admiral butterflies, wasps, bees, magpie moths, etc.

## K

**Kimbolton:** This small township is approximately 40 kilometres north-east of Palmerston North and about two kilometres south of the turn-off to Āpiti. The town provides for its mainly farming community and has a school, tavern and a café. Kimbolton is particularly well-known for its excellent climate for rhododendrons and azaleas. Heritage Park, in the village, and Cross Hills Gardens, just north of Kimbolton, are two notable gardens open to the public that are well worth a visit.

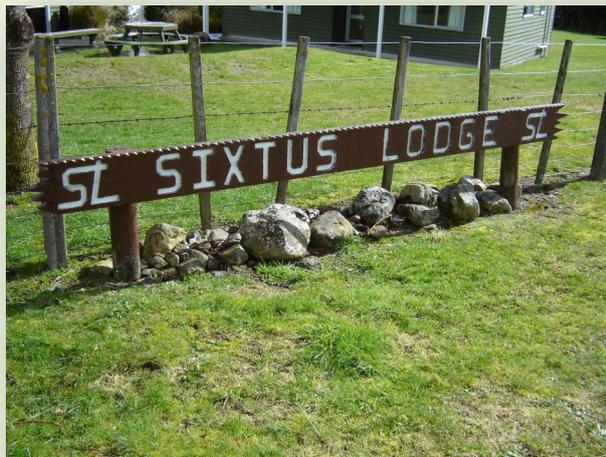
**Kitchen:** The Sixtus Lodge kitchen and its facilities can cater for both large and small groups. Easy-to-use ovens, toasters, microwaves, fridge and freezer, as well as a wide range of pots, pans, glassware and crockery, cutlery and utensils are provided for users of the Lodge. Please clean everything thoroughly and replace all equipment back in their correct positions after each use.

**Kitchen Scraps:** All food scraps and other rubbish must be taken home by the group. It must not be burnt, buried or heaved over the cliff. Also, do not scatter food scraps for birds - it encourages less desirable feral creatures (such as cats, rats and possums).

When finally vacating the Lodge, please remember to take away your bag of scraps and rubbish from the pull-out bin in the pantry!

**Knight’s Track:** See Appendix.

**Sixtus Lodge was established as an outdoor education centre in 1977, so that urban children could experience the bush and the mountains.**



**The Lodge is well-equipped and provides comfortable accommodation for both large and small groups.**

**Although established as an outdoor education centre, all visitors are welcome—school camps, clubs, friends and family groups, business teams, community organisations etc.**



**Kotukutuku (tree fuchsia):** Tree fuchsia specimens can be seen on the roadside near Sixtus Lodge (on Limestone Road towards Cone Creek bridge), down the steps from the Arboretum, and down the steps to the Dell. It flowers from September to October.

## L

**Lambing:** Sixtus Lodge is surrounded by farmland stocked with cattle and sheep. Lambing time occurs during the late winter to spring months (July to October) and during this time all Lodge users are asked to take extra care near fence lines, and not to allow boisterous behaviour to separate the lambs from their mothers.

**Lichens:** Seen on fences, rocks and trees.

**Limestone Creek:** See Appendix.

**Limestone Road:** This unsealed road leads from Table Flat Road for about 10 kilometres and winds its way past Sixtus Lodge for another one kilometre to the road-end carpark. From here you enter the Ruahine Forest Park. Take care on Limestone Road as some parts of it are narrow with sharp corners encountered.

**Lizards:** Both geckos (*moko-papa*) and skinks (*moko-moko*) are present in the area, although hard to find. Watch for them moving in the vegetation near tracks and on banks.

**Loop Track:** See Deerford-Diagonal-Shorts Loop Walk in the Appendix.

## M

**Maps:** There are large maps of the Western Ruahine Ranges on the wall in the Sixtus Lodge lounge, and Ruahine Forest Park maps at the road ends of both Limestone and Petersons Roads. 'Topo50 map BL36 Norsewood', from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), is a detailed map of the region.

**Medical Supplies:** All groups must bring suitable medical supplies and first aid kits for their camps.

**Mistletoe:** Specimens can be seen six metres up the banded red beech tree by the small gate from the Challenge Course. It flowers (red) in mid-December.

**Mountain Plants:** A number of alpine species are planted in the garden at Sixtus Lodge- tussocks, hebes, mountain daisies and the native foxglove. Below the Lodge many tree species, including mountain cabbage trees, have also been planted. Further afield, above the forest line on the Ngamoko Range, mountain plants can be found including tussock grass, small hebes, dracophyllum, leatherwood scrub, mountain toetoe, and alpine flowers.

**Mosses:** There is a huge variety found in the area. One of particular note is *Dawsonia superba* – some 10 centimetres in height - found along the drier parts of the Deerford Track. It looks like a very young pine tree.

**Mountain Safety:** Be aware that, in mountainous country, extremes of weather and sudden weather changes can occur. Trips into the high country need careful planning, and trampers need to be physically fit, well-equipped, and led by someone with experience of the area and upland conditions.

## N

**Natural Environment:** The surrounding environment at Sixtus Lodge involves all aspects of New Zealand's nature heritage. Please treat it with respect.

**Neighbours:** Sixtus Lodge is fortunate to have good, friendly and co-operative farming neighbours. Our neighbours are invaluable for keeping an eye on the Lodge and its surroundings.

**Ngahere a Tane:** See Appendix.

**Ngamoko Room:** A double garage-sized building situated at the rear of the Lodge. The room is carpeted, has benches and running water, and can be used for a variety of activities.

## O

**Onga Onga (Tree Nettle):** A species of stinging nettle which can cause a very painful irritation if touched. There is a sign-posted example on the Paton Track.

**Orientation:** Teachers or leaders of any school groups wanting to take a class camp to Sixtus Lodge must complete our Teacher Orientation Course. Orientation courses are organised by experienced members of the Sixtus Lodge Trust Board. The course covers familiarisation with the Lodge and its surroundings, including some of the walks in the area. For the dates of the next course, refer to the website or contact the Booking Secretary.

**Orienteering:** Good terrain for orienteering activities is available. For those considering using the Lodge grounds as an orienteering course, please be aware of the following:

- The cliff behind the Lodge buildings is unstable in parts. Organisers therefore are asked not to set up orienteering and challenge-type courses on, near, or below the cliff face.
- The area on the other side of Cone Creek has been planted in native trees.

Orienteering courses must keep to the terrace on which the Lodge is built or the formed tracks below. Courses must not be set up on the privately-owned farmland surrounding the Lodge property.

**Oroua River:** The river winds its way down from the upper Western Ruahine Ranges and can be accessed from Sixtus Lodge via Heritage Lodge (see Appendix). The Oroua River valley is a popular destination for tramping, fishing and hunting groups.

**Oroua River Walk:** See Appendix.

## P

**Permits:** Check with the Department of Conservation regarding fishing, firearm and hut permits, and having dogs in the Ruahine Forest Park.

**Possums (Opossums) Rats, Mice and Feral Cats:** All are considered serious pests. Do not scatter food scraps on the grounds - it encourages these pests.

## R

**Red Rock:** Outcrops of a red rock (red argillite) are found throughout the Ruahine Ranges. See Appendix for good locations.

**River Studies:**

- Cone Creek and Coal (Makiekie) Creek – close by.
- Oroua, Pohangina and Manawatu Rivers – a little further afield.

**Roads:** To get to Sixtus Lodge, one travels on the Oroua Valley Road through Āpiti, turning on to Table Flat Road some 2-3 kilometres north of the village. Table Flat Road becomes Limestone Road at the intersection with Petersons Road (Petersons Road leads to the carpark above Heritage Lodge). Limestone Road continues on to Sixtus Lodge and a further kilometre beyond to a carpark which is the starting point for the **Deerford, Shorts', and Knight's Tracks** into the forest park. Limestone Road is narrow and windy. Great care is required, as it is unsealed and there is always the potential for wandering stock and feral animals.

Any significant damage on the road (washouts, fallen trees, slips etc) should be reported to the Manawatu District Council on (06) 323 0000.

**Rope Challenge:** Using long lengths of rope or twine (not supplied), strung high or low, set a course/trail for a group activity. With imagination, there are many variations for rope course challenges - for example blindfold, in pairs, and night challenges. When preparing a rope walk do consider the potential for injury to the participants and damage to the vegetation.

**Rubbish:** All rubbish is to be taken home. No rubbish of any type is to be left in Sixtus Lodge or on the property. A large metal rubbish bin, outside the kitchen, is provided for the disposal of ashes. This is emptied, when required, by Trust Board members.

## S

**Shorts' Track:** See Appendix.

**Shower Facilities:** Good showering facilities with ample hot water are provided both in the Lodge and in Toka Cottage.

**Sixtus Lodge Property** (see map on page 4): The Sixtus Lodge property covers some six hectares. It is bounded on three sides by Limestone Road. On the fourth side is a fence stretching from Limestone Road, across the terrace, to the cliff face. From the base of the face the fence crosses Cone Creek and slants up a slope to meet Limestone Road again.

The Lodge buildings are on a terrace above Cone Creek. Two tracks descend from the terrace to the creek. The east-side track descends from near the Challenge Course to **The Dell**. The track on the west side descends from just past the **Arboretum**. At the base of the cliff, this track becomes **Bonnevie Track** and snakes its way along the Lodge side of Cone Creek to The Dell.

There are two tracks on the far side of Cone Creek. The track down from the Arboretum crosses the creek over a plank bridge to become **Paton Track** and follows the creek to eventually meet Limestone Road. **Warren Track** branches off Paton Track and climbs to meet Limestone Road at a higher point than does Paton Track.

When descending to the Cone Creek area tenants are asked to use the two descending tracks and not to make their own trails down the cliff face. Parts of the cliff are unstable and the Trust Board is encouraging the growth of small shrubs and ferns to stabilise it. Similarly, tenants are asked to keep to the formed tracks in the valley and not to damage the newly-planted native trees.

**Smoke Alarms:** There are wired-in smoke alarms in dormitories and the lounge. Toko Cottage has a standard smoke alarm.

**Sports:** There is a large mown field for sports and games. Groups need to supply their own sports equipment.

**Stiles:** Have been erected at appropriate crossing places – please use them. If there is no stile, that fence is not to be crossed because the land on the other side may not be entered.

**Stream Studies:** Always replace rocks and creatures to their original positions.

**Supervision:** Needs to be constant. School groups should have the correct adult/student ratio (1:6).

**Swimming Holes:** The area is not well served with good places to swim. The Oroua River below Heritage Lodge is always frigid and neither Cone nor Coal Creeks have any decent-sized pools near the property. One possibility, though, is the Āpiti Scenic Reserve: travel back along Table Flat Road on to Oroua Valley Road and turn right. Three kilometres along this road you will come to the Reserve by the road bridge over the Oroua River.

# T

**Table Tennis:** A table and net is provided and set up in the Ngamoko Room. Please provide your own bats and balls.

**Telephone:** Sixtus Lodge telephone is situated in the pantry by the kitchen. A second telephone is in a Toka Cottage bedroom. The telephone number is (06) 328 4823. Local calls (including to Palmerston North) can be made from here. There is a toll bar on this telephone.

Mobile phone reception is good. Groups using the Lodge should also have alternative communication and/or emergency locator systems with them, especially if heading further out into the Forest Park.

There is no WIFI at the Lodge.

**Tracks and Tramps:** Listed below are the tracks and tramps usually associated with users of Sixtus Lodge. Brief directions and descriptions for some of these tracks are found in the Appendix under their own title.

- Deerford Track
- The Diagonal
- Heritage Lodge
- Knight's Track
- Shorts' Track
- Tunupo Track

For details about tracks within the property, see the descriptions under 'Sixtus Lodge Property'.

**Trespass:** Please keep off private property. The Sixtus Lodge Board of Trustees and our neighbours have a good relationship and we do not want trespassing to become a problem. On any Lodge fenceline, if there is no stile, the land on the other side should not be entered.

**Trig Stations:**

- Toka – 1526 metres above sea level
- Tunupo – 1568 metres above sea level

Both these trigs are situated atop the Ngamoko Range to the east of the Lodge. A full day's tramp would be required to reach either trig and return.

**Tussock:** Alpine tussock grasslands occur in the higher areas of the Ngamoko Range, with flowering plants in bloom from November to February.

## V

**Ventilation:** Air vents are located in the dormitories and ablutions. To avoid excess condensation when large numbers are using the Lodge, make sure the dormitories are aired during the day when the Lodge is occupied.

**Volleyball:** Two poles and a net are available to be set up on the sports field. Users of the Lodge will need to supply their own ball.

## W

**Walks:** There are many walks in and around the Sixtus Lodge. See the noticeboard in the Lodge and the Appendix of this booklet.

**Water Supply:** Sixtus Lodge water is pumped from a fresh water spring and automatically treated by an ultra-violet filter attached to the system. If there are any problems with the water supply, contact one of the numbers listed on the sheet 'Emergency Details' (on the wall by the phone in the pantry). Should you need to turn off the supply of water (e.g. because of a burst pipe), there is a toby valve in the concrete path on the east side of the main building—i.e. at the corner nearest to the road gate.

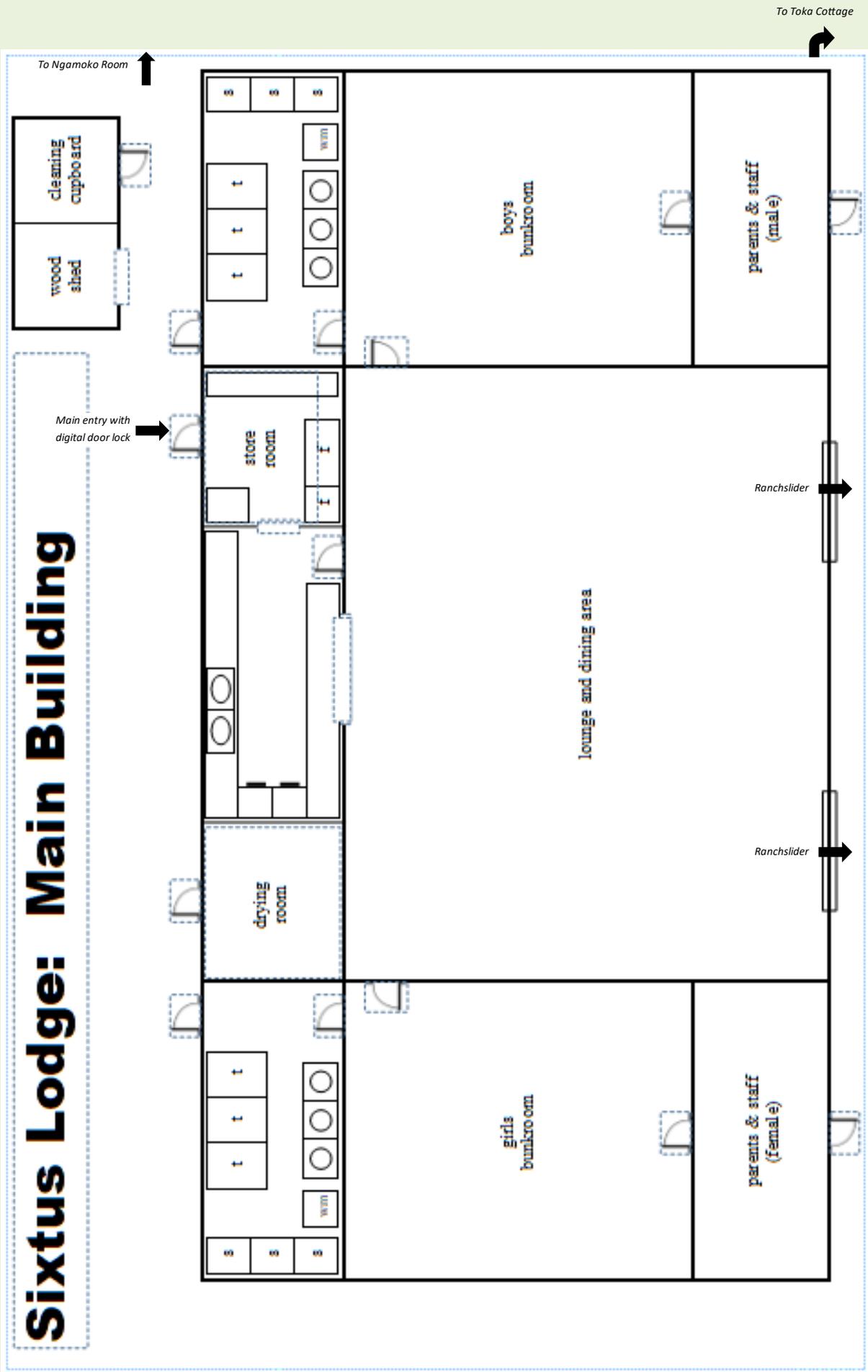
**Website:** Visit [www.sixtuslodge.co.nz](http://www.sixtuslodge.co.nz)

On the website you will find:

- Description of facilities with photos
- Location map and contact details
- Attractions with links to DOC and ManawatuNZ websites
- Tenant Information (documents to download):
  - Sixtus Lodge Terms and Conditions
  - Information for First Time Users of Sixtus Lodge
  - Information for Tenants at Sixtus Lodge
  - Checklist for Tenants at Sixtus Lodge (tasks at Arrival and Departure)
  - Information for Camps at Sixtus Lodge:
    - What Sixtus Lodge supplies for Tenants
    - What Tenants need to supply for Camps
- Bookings: online booking form and contact details for Booking Secretary.

**Wood Pigeon (Kereru):** Are often seen and heard when out in the bush and occasionally around the Lodge surroundings.

# Sixtus Lodge: Main Building





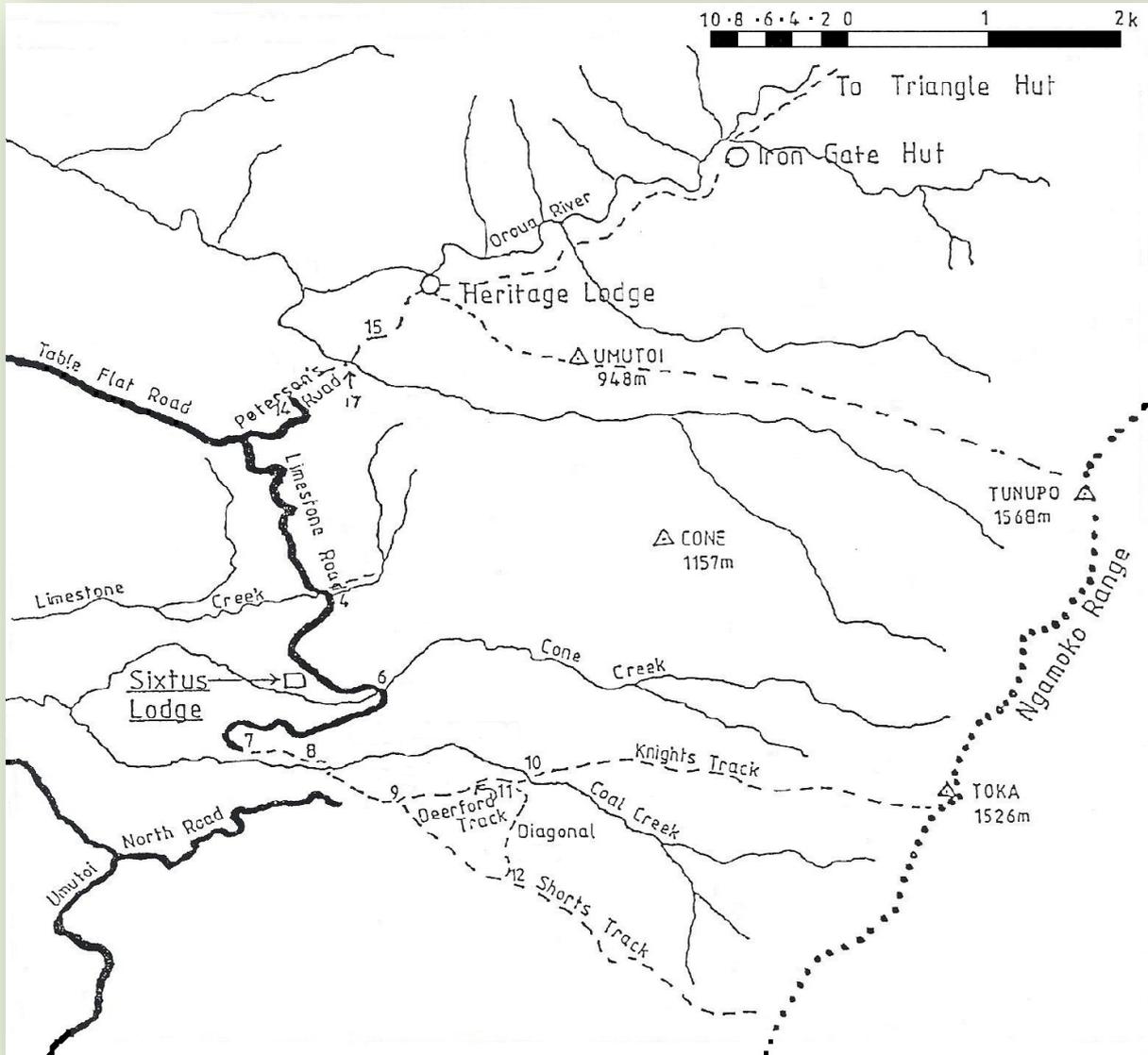
# APPENDIX

## Walking Tracks and Places of Interest

### CONTENTS

Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge  
Arch Bridge  
Coal (Makiekie) Creek  
Coal Creek Walk  
Cone Creek  
Cone Creek Walk  
Deerford Track  
Deerford—Diagonal—Shorts' Loop Walk  
The Diagonal  
Glow-worm Caves  
Knight's Track  
Knight's—Ngamoko—Shorts' Circuit Walk  
Oroua River  
Oroua River Walk  
Red Rock  
Shorts' - Ngamoko—Knight's Circuit  
Shorts' Track  
Tunupo Track

# SIXTUS LODGE: TRACKS AND LOCATIONS



The numbers relate to entries in the body of the Appendix.

## BEFORE YOU START...

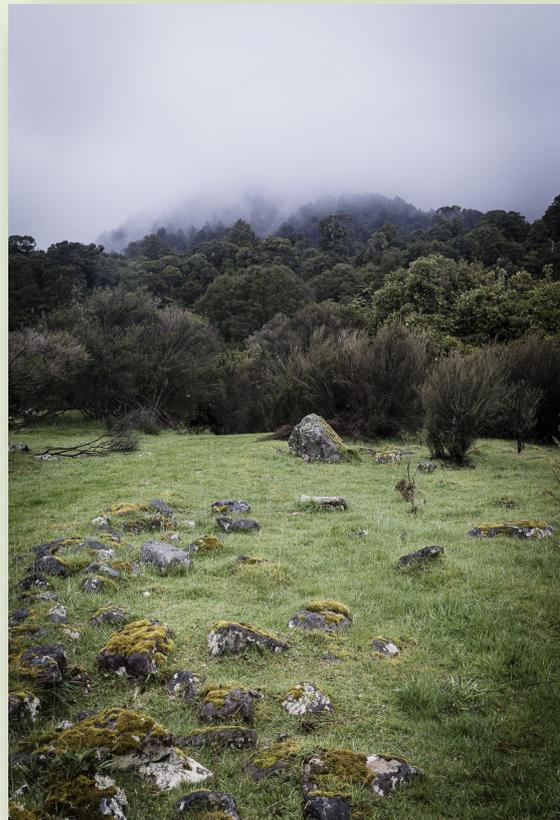
**The descriptions which follow must not be regarded as complete tramping guides.** They are merely a brief description of the site or the track and the means of accessing it. Also, they are intended primarily for school groups. Similarly, the map which accompanies this appendix is a simplified one and does not show all the water courses, huts and bivouacs in the area. Again, it only locates the tracks and points of interest which would be of significance to school groups.

**Good maps of the area can be downloaded from the [DOC website](#).**

**For those requiring a more detailed map, Topo50 map BL36 Norsewood, available online from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), is to be recommended.**

Before embarking on an excursion, group leaders should always carefully consider the weather conditions, the personal fitness of the party and their knowledge of the skills needed when venturing into the outdoors.

Furthermore, it would be regarded as foolhardy to embark on a tramp with young people, and especially if it goes above the bushline, unless at least one of the leaders has done the tramp on a previous occasion.



**Scenes from nearby Ruahine Forest Park.**

**The numbers in the entries indicate their location on the map (page 25).  
Tracks are also labelled on the map.**

### **Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge**

The Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge ('Heritage Lodge') is owned by the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association (NZDA). Part of it is always unlocked and open for the public, making it a good rest-point for groups journeying on down to the Oroua River, upstream to the Iron Gate and Triangle Huts, and along the track up to Tunupo on the crest of Ngamoko Range. Bookings for overnighiting and using the complete building can be made through the Manawatu Branch of the NZDA: email [manawatuda@gmail.com](mailto:manawatuda@gmail.com).

A request from the NZDA: There is a Log Book in the Lodge for hunting and tramping parties to note their intentions, and the NZDA requests that only the leader in a group sign the book.

The building is named after Alice Nash, an identity of the district, and a significant benefactor for its rebuilding after it was burnt down a few years ago.

Access is from the carpark at the end of Petersons Road.<sup>14</sup> Follow the track (an old logging road) to the right and down the hill through farmland and into the Forest Park. The track crosses over an Arch Bridge<sup>17</sup> then passes an overgrown rifle range<sup>15</sup> to eventually reach a track junction about 30 minutes after leaving the carpark. The left fork continues on down to the Oroua River while the right fork leads to the Heritage Lodge (less than five minutes away) and to the start of Tunupo Track.

### **Arch Bridge**

The Arch Bridge<sup>17</sup> crosses the Umutoi Stream about halfway along the track between the carpark at the end of Petersons Road<sup>14</sup> and Heritage Lodge. The bridge, erected by the NZ Army Corps of Royal Engineers from Linton, replaced a wire swing bridge. A point to ponder: Why is the bridge arched rather than flat?

A caution: The bridge footway can be very slippery in wet or icy weather.

## Coal (Makiekie) Creek

The quite picturesque Coal (Makiekie) Creek starts high in the Ngamoko Range. Several tributaries join it before it eventually feeds into the Pohangina River which, in turn, flows into the Manawatu River.

Access is from the carpark at the end of Limestone Road.<sup>7</sup> From here follow the fenceline<sup>8</sup> and poled route for about 700 metres, and you'll come to Coal Creek after about 10 minutes.

## Coal Creek Walk

It is possible to walk upstream along Coal Creek to the beginning of Knight's Track at its junction with Deerford Track.<sup>10</sup> You'll be in water most of the way and there's a very rough and stony creek bed. Also, you're in shade for virtually the whole way. Part-way along there is a high rock barrier which needs to be climbed – rope (not supplied) will be needed for this.

## Cone Creek

Cone Creek, another picturesque stream, issues from the foothills, passes through the Sixtus Lodge property below the terrace, then across farmland and into Coal Creek. Within the property there is one 'dry' crossing place: a narrow plank bridge where the Paton Track branches off the Bonnievie Track. To cross elsewhere along the stream requires rock-hopping or wading.



## Cone Creek Walk

A walk along the stream bed of Cone Creek can be quite interesting. As with most of the streams in the area, the bed is stony and very uneven, and enclosed within a valley for much of the way. About an hour upstream of the road bridge<sup>6</sup> there is a narrow cutting which is difficult to pass through unless you have some eight metres of rope.

Groups taking this excursion must return along the stream bed and not climb on to and traverse the adjacent farmland.

## Deerford Track

Deerford Track is an excellent tramp for all ages and staminas. It can be walked in all weathers since it is always within bush, it is well defined and surfaced, and it involves very little climbing.

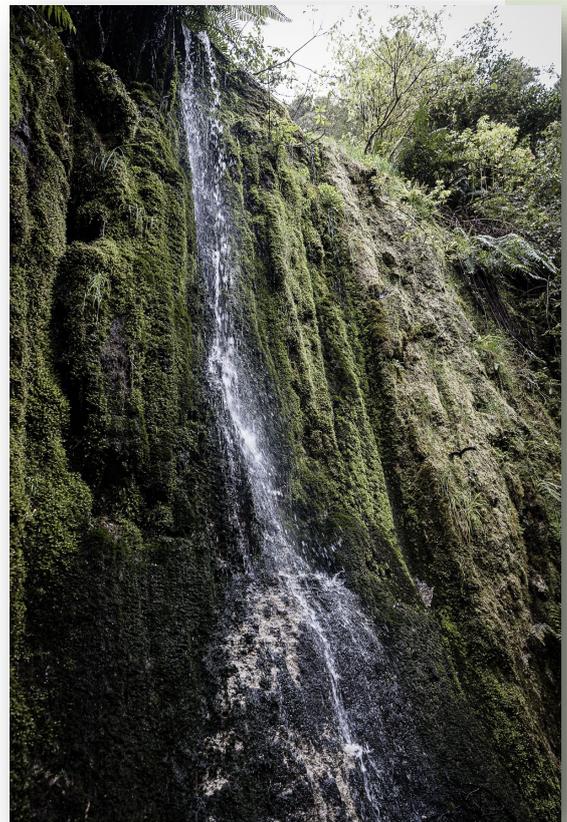
Access: from the carpark at the end of Limestone Road,<sup>7</sup> follow the fenceline<sup>8</sup> and poled route for about 700 metres. The track slopes down to meet Coal Creek which needs to be forded. Follow the track up the other side and, after a short, sharp climb, continue on to the junction<sup>9</sup> of Deerford Track and Shorts' Track. Deerford Track continues eastward (to the left) for about 30 minutes until the next fork,<sup>11</sup> where it links to The Diagonal and Knight's Track (refer to their entries in this booklet).

## Deerford—Diagonal—Shorts' Loop Walk

This is a worthwhile tramp for primary school children as it enables groups to undertake an interesting and, in parts, challenging tramp in reasonable safety and comfort. The entire route remains below the bush-line and, as it is a loop walk, little backtracking is required. The walk, from the carpark at the end of Limestone Road and back, should be able to be completed in four to five hours, and this includes a stop for lunch at the highest park of the walk (at the intersection<sup>12</sup> of The Diagonal with Shorts' Track).

The main decision is in which direction to go – clockwise or anti-clockwise. The Deerford section is an easy walk. The Shorts' section is quite long and a steady climb whereas the Diagonal section is much steeper but also much shorter. Most groups tend to go clockwise – along Deerford, up the Diagonal, down Shorts' – and the following description takes that direction.

Access: First walk to the Deerford Track (see above). Travel eastwards (i.e. left) along the Deerford for about 30 minutes until a fork in the track is reached<sup>11</sup>. The right fork continues as 'The Diagonal' and zigzags upwards across a steep slope for about 30 minutes. It reaches Shorts' Track just prior to that track's exit from the bush<sup>12</sup>. Then turn right and travel down Shorts' until you reach its intersection with Deerford<sup>9</sup> (after about 50 -60 minutes). Go back along the Deerford and follow the track back to Coal Creek and on to the trail-end at Limestone Road.



## The Diagonal

The 'Diagonal' links the eastern end of the Deerford Track to Shorts' Track, enabling a group to undertake an interesting and challenging loop walk in reasonable safety and comfort. See the 'Deerford—Diagonal—Shorts' Loop Walk' entry. The actual Diagonal zigzags across a quite steep face. It is a stiff climb of about 30 minutes.

Access: The Deerford Track forks just before it reaches Coal Creek at its eastern end.<sup>11</sup> The left fork drops down to Coal Creek while the right fork continues as 'The Diagonal' and climbs to meet Shorts' Track just before that track exits from the bush into the leatherwood and tussock.<sup>12</sup>

## Glow-worm Caves

The glow-worm caves<sup>4</sup> are on Limestone Creek. Limestone Road actually crosses over them about a kilometre before the Lodge. A short, steep and slippery path descends from the road into the creek bed and then it is a walk of about 70 metres to the caves proper. While glow-worms can occasionally be seen in daylight in the high, dark recesses of the cave, a much better display can be seen after dark, both in the cave and along the creek banks. The caves are wet and dripping and, as it is necessary to walk on an uneven creek-bed through running water, suitable footwear and parkas are essential. It should be noted, though, that the water is rarely more than 30 centimetres in depth. In daytime at least one torch should be available to the group. Visitors are asked not to damage the limestone formations, which are quite brittle, and not to try to capture glow-worms. Wetas may also be seen in the nooks and crannies of the cave and visitors are reminded that these, too, are a protected species.



## Knight's Track

Knight's Track is one of two tracks in the vicinity which ascend to the crest of Ngamoko Range – the other being Shorts' Track. It begins at the eastern end of Deerford Track, where it meets Coal Creek, and climbs to Toka Trig (1526 metres), which is some six kilometres from Sixtus Lodge. The track is quite steep in parts and, once beyond the bushline and into the leatherwood and tussock, poles and waratahs mark the route.

Access: From the carpark at the end of Limestone Road<sup>7</sup>, first walk to Deerford Track and continue until you reach a fork in the track after about 30 minutes. Take the left fork and within 50 metres or so you'll be at Coal Creek. Cross Coal Creek<sup>10</sup> and you'll see the sign indicating the start of Knight's Track.

A return trip from the Lodge to the top is likely to take over six hours and it should be noted that about half of this time could be spent in very exposed situations, and away from the protection of the bush. Even in sunny weather, conditions are likely to be chilly and, given the changeable weather so characteristic of our highland regions, a pleasant outing can very quickly become a life-threatening experience. Hypothermia and/or injury is always a possibility and leaders should be aware that a helicopter is not always available to lift someone out – and, even if one is, weather conditions may not allow for communication or immediate rescue.

This being so, a climb to the top would probably be beyond the capabilities and interests of most primary school-aged children.

However, it has to be admitted that a real sense of achievement can be gained from reaching the top. It should be added that, in clear weather, Feilding, Palmerston North, Dannevirke and Kapiti Island can be seen from the top.

#### **Knight's—Ngamoko—Shorts' Circuit Walk**

This tramp would take some eight hours. It involves ascending to the crest of Ngamoko Range by either Knight's or Shorts' Tracks, following the crest to the other track, and then descending by it. The route along the crest (about two kilometres and an hour's walk) is poled and it should be noted that the going through the tussock isn't that easy.

Which of the tracks to ascend and descend is a matter of personal preference but it could be noted that Shorts' is the steeper and that maybe it's better to ascend by Knight's and descend by Shorts'.

The comments about the exposed situations at the top and the possible difficulties which could be met, and which are described under 'Knight's Track', obviously apply to this walk also. And again it could be mentioned that probably the Circuit Walk is beyond the capabilities and interests of most primary school-aged children.

#### **Oroua River**

The Oroua River is the largest river in the immediate vicinity. It winds its way down from the upper Western Ruahine Ranges to eventually flow into the Manawatu River south of Feilding. The river valley is a popular destination for tramping, hunting and fishing groups. It should be noted that the water is always cold and, when in flood, it is quite awe-inspiring but dangerous.

### **Oroua River Walk**

The walk from the carpark<sup>14</sup> at the end of Petersons Road down to the Oroua River takes about an hour. It is downhill virtually the whole way. But therein lies a problem: the return to the carpark is uphill! Thus, the return is going to take much longer and, if the conditions are wet and slippery, even up to three hours. But it is a walk that can be recommended as it uses a well-formed track – it's an old logging road – and there is an excellent shelter or rest spot about halfway: Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge

Access: From the carpark at the end of Petersons Road<sup>14</sup> follow the track to the right and down the hill through farmland and into the Forest Park. The track continues over an Arch Bridge<sup>17</sup>, past a rather overgrown rifle range<sup>15</sup> to eventually reach a fork. The left fork carries on down to the Oroua River while the right fork takes you to Heritage Lodge (about five minutes away) and the start of the Tunupo Track. If you intend to have a break at Heritage Lodge, you will need to return to the fork before carrying on down to the river along the well-defined track (please note that it can be rather wet and mucky in parts).

### **Red Rock**

Outcrops of a red rock (red argillite) are found throughout the Ruahine Ranges. A good example of red rock formations can be seen 30 minutes upstream from where the Deerford Track crosses Coal Creek to become Knight's Track<sup>10</sup>. Allow two to three hours return from Sixtus Lodge. See also the brochure at the Lodge on Red Rock formations.

### **Shorts'—Ngamoko—Knight's Circuit Walk**

See Knight's—Ngamoko—Shorts' Circuit Walk.

### **Shorts' Track**

Shorts' Track (named after an identity of the district who wore shorts all year round) is one of two tracks in the vicinity which ascend to the crest of Ngamoko Range – the other being Knight's Track. It starts at the western end of Deerford Track<sup>9</sup> and ascends to eventually reach the crest at about 1350 metres – some six kilometres from Sixtus Lodge. It is a fairly steep track which, in inclement weather, can prove rather slow-going. Within the bush the track is well-defined but in the tussock its route is only marked by poles or waratahs.

The comments about the exposed situation and possible difficulties that may be met, which are described for Knight's Track, also apply to excursions up Shorts' Track.

Access: Begin at the carpark at the end of Limestone Road<sup>7</sup> and first walk to the fork of Deerford Track, where it intersects with the beginning of Shorts' Track<sup>9</sup>.

### **Tunupo Track**

The Tunupo Trig (1568 metres) is another of the trigs on the Ngamoko Range. It is some eight kilometres from the carpark at the end of Petersons Road and it would probably take more than four hours to just reach the trig. Then there is the return trip, either back down this track or along the crest and then down either Knight's or Shorts' Track.

While it is a fairly good track, it should be noted that much of it is beyond the shelter of the bush-line and, with that fact, comes a host of potential hazards. The trip is probably beyond most primary school aged children and, apart from the sense of achievement gained through 'making it', one could question the value of taking such a group to the top.

Access: From the carpark at the end of Peterson's Road <sup>14</sup>, follow the track towards Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge (see that entry). At the track junction just before reaching Heritage Lodge, take the right fork onto Tunupo Track.



## SIXTUS LODGE TRUST BOARD

The Sixtus Lodge Trust Board is a group of volunteers who manage the Sixtus Lodge Outdoor Education Centre. Five meetings are held in Palmerston North each year to run the day to day management of Sixtus Lodge.

Members of the community are most welcome to join the Board. Often new members attend several working bees prior to being nominated to the Sixtus Lodge Trust Board.

Meeting dates can be found on the Sixtus Lodge website.



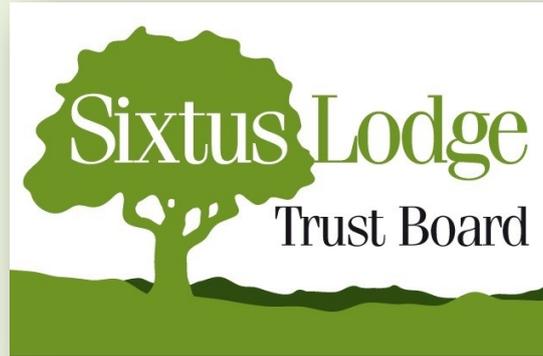
## FRIENDS OF SIXTUS LODGE

Anyone who has a passion to help provide a unique experience to schools and community groups is warmly invited to join Sixtus Lodge working bees.

If you have skills in building maintenance, painting, cleaning, tree planting, bush maintenance or enjoy doing odd jobs, your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Working bees are held on four weekends throughout the year, and during some weeks when there are no other Lodge bookings.

Please visit the Sixtus Lodge website for further details: [www.sixtuslodge.co.nz](http://www.sixtuslodge.co.nz)



**Published by Sixtus Lodge Trust Board  
P O Box 1987, Palmerston North 4440**

[www.sixtuslodge.co.nz](http://www.sixtuslodge.co.nz)