Wilderness
New Zealand's magazine of the outdoors

Iron Gate Hut, Ruahine Forest Park

WILD FILE
Access From Petersons Road, off Table Flat Road
Grade Easy
Time 4-5hr to the hut
Distance 7.56km
Accommodation Iron Gate Hut, seven bunks
Map BL36

Description
Iron Gate Hut, on the western side of Ruahine Forest Park, is a wee gem set beside the Oroua River. With the road end only an hour's drive from Palmerston North, then an easy five-hour tramp to the hut, it's a great overnight trip.
Start through the wrought iron gates at the car park, head down the hill and enter the bush. The initial forest is a lovely stand of beech and the track heads down to a bridge that crosses a deep gorge. Within 40-minutes of leaving the car you reach the smart Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge, the local NZDA hut.
From here the track is pleasantly undulating and easy to follow, a mixture of clear patches and forest. Soon you reach Cumberfield Creek which can be almost impassable after heavy rainfall.
After the creek is the first big uphill grunt; a climb, scramble and clamber up a root-strewn slope using trees, branches and vines to assist. The track continues at this higher level for a while with pleasant river views before a descent to the riverbed.
If the river levels are low, you can walk up the riverbed to avoid the next steep climb; there are some good swimming holes, though expect some crossings to reach mid-thigh.
Rejoin the track at Tunipo Stream for another climb, after which the track eases, becoming a combination of small ups and downs, and, as you get closer to the hut, long flat stretches of goblin-like forest beside the river.

Elevation Profile

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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not take responsibility for any errors in the route. Users should use discretion when planning their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing.

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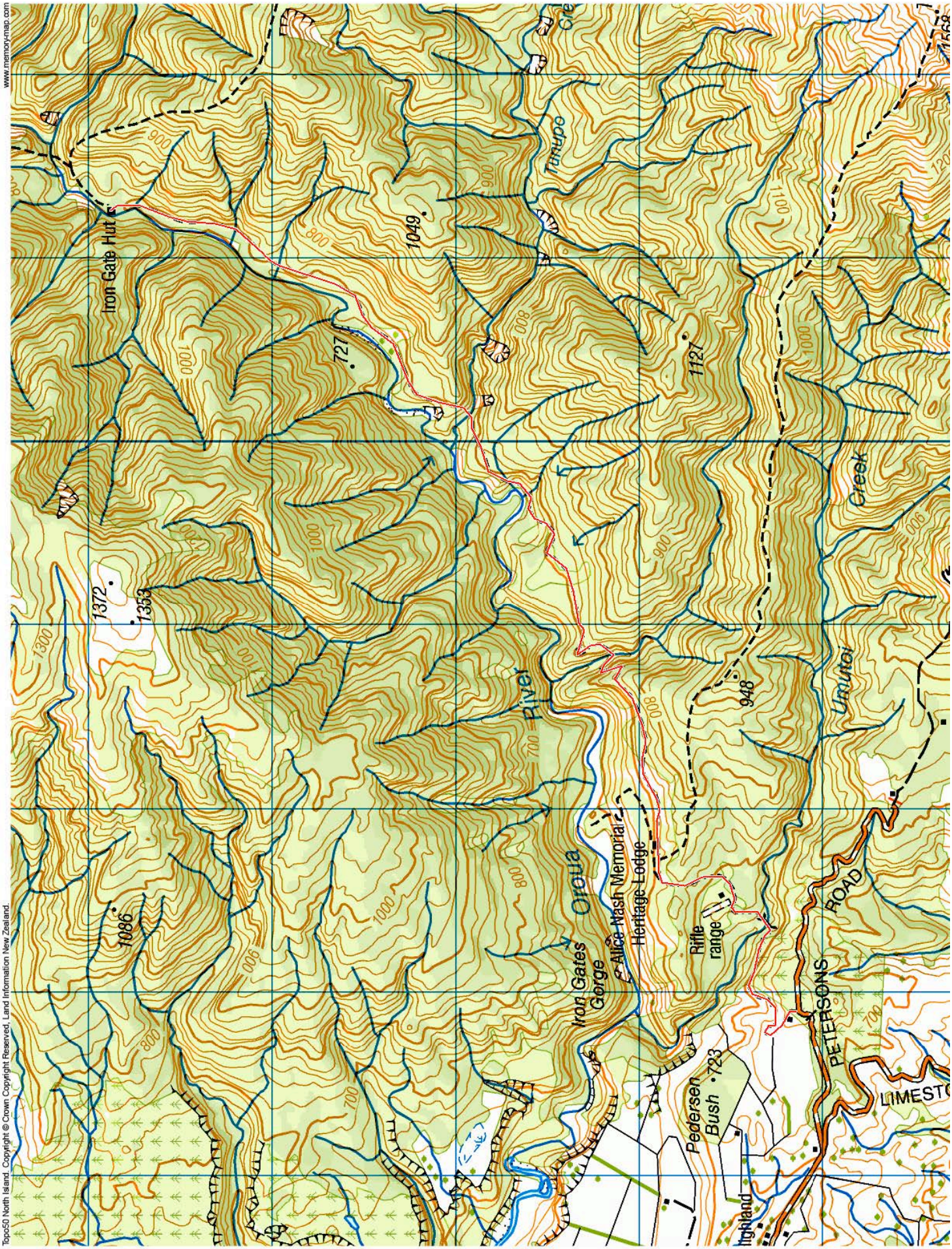

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