



Brook Homestead Walk

How to get there

Take State Highway 1 south, turn off at Drury and follow the signs to Waiuku. From Waiuku drive up the Āwhitu Peninsula through Matakawau. About 2km past Matakawau turn right down Brook Rd into the park.

For public transport information: phone Auckland Transport **09 366 6400** or visit **at.govt.nz**

Please take your rubbish home

Your parks provide open space, fresh air, a home for native plants and animals, clean water, beauty and inspiration. Help keep them this way.

- No bins
- No rubbish
- Better parks
- 

Dogs

Dogs are prohibited from all areas of Āwhitu Regional Park. Please leave your furry friends at home.

For detailed information visit **aucklandcouncil.govt.nz** or phone Auckland Council on **09 301 0101**.

Āwhitu Regional Park

On the south west shores of the Manukau Harbour, Āwhitu Regional Park is a peaceful retreat. It has tranquil bays, rolling pastures and a rich history, learn about some of this history from the interpretation trail. Transformed wetlands lie behind the park's two long, sandy beaches (Kauritūtahi Beach and Brook Beach) and provide a wonderful habitat for the rare fernbird (mātātā) and banded rail (moho pererū).

Both the Āwhitu Peninsula and the park take their names from the pre-European Māori settlement of Āwhitu, which was located at the western end of Ōrua Bay to the north of the park. It was named because of the 'yearning' (āwhitu) felt by Hōturoa, the commander of the Tainui canoe (waka), when he left the district. The traditional name for the Park's location was Kauritūtahi, so named for the single kauri tree which stood on the small islet off the park.

Māori Heritage

The Ngāti Te Ata and Ngāti Kahukoka people originally occupied the Aawhitu Peninsula. Their descendants still maintain strong links to this land, with marae located in and around Waiuku.

The large waka Toki-a-Tāpiri, which now rests at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, came from this area. Evidence from middens on the park indicates Māori used the local area extensively for fishing and resource gathering. You can learn more about the park's stories from the interpretation boards scattered throughout the park.

Plants and animals

Āwhitu has an outstanding variety of mature exotic trees, planted by the Brook family who settled on the land in 1875. The Brook Homestead is surrounded by Lawson cypresses and Japanese Cedars. Look out for the huge macrocarpa trunk, which is almost 6 metres wide. It is one of the largest in the world.

The Brook family had a tradition of planting a kauri tree to mark a family event. Look out for these trees around the park.

More recently planting has focussed on native species to enhance the important wetlands and naturally regenerating coastal forest nearby.

The original wetlands at Āwhitu were drained to create more pasture for farm animals.

This process is being reversed – the stock have been removed, the drains blocked, the floodgate removed and volunteers have helped plant around the edges. Slowly nature has returned – first the plants, then the insects, birds and fish. And now the wetlands at Āwhitu are considered some of the best and most extensive left in the Auckland region. The wetlands, along with salt marsh, beach and intertidal areas, create unique and valuable bird habitats at Āwhitu.

The wetlands harbour a number of rare native species such as the Banded Rail, Bitten and Fern Bird (mātātā). The Fern Bird is



Auckland Council manages 28 regional parks

For more information on any of these parks: phone **09 301 0101** or visit **aucklandcouncil.govt.nz**

Ranger contact details

To contact a park ranger use the phone at the information board just inside the park entrance and follow the instructions. If using a mobile phone call **09 301 0101**.

Volunteering

We would love to have your help with work in regional parks. Age and physical ability is no barrier as there are tasks and projects to suit all individuals and groups.

For more information on volunteering: phone **09 301 0101** or visit **aucklandcouncil.govt.nz**

particularly elusive and shy, but tune your ears and you may hear them calling out their name "mā tā tā".

They are also home to the paradise shelduck (pūtangitangi) mallard, Californian quail, kererū, pūkeko, tui, shags, variable oyster catchers, and spoonbills.

History

English immigrants John and Sarah Brook built the Brook Homestead, originally called Brook Haven, in 1878. It remains a central feature of the park. The family added the bach in front of the homestead in 1907.

The old jetty, which remains at Kauritūtahi Bay, was also built by the Brook family. It was a lifeline to the outside world when this far-flung place had no roads. Basic supplies and visitors came in across these boards, and kauri posts and farm product went out.

In 1971, John Brook's grandson Fred sold his land to the Auckland Regional Council (ARC). Āwhitu Regional Park was officially opened in 1975 and continues to operate as a working farm.

To mark the parks 25th anniversary, a carving (powhenua) depicting the fernbird (mātātā) was erected overlooking the wetlands in Nov 2000. Originally carved from a fallen kauri sourced from the park, this was later replaced by the a stone sculpture, carved collaboratively by George Flavell (Ngāti Te Ata kaumatua), John Allen (park ranger) and Willie Apiata VC (park volunteer).

Park facilities

Prime picnic spots

Find your own favourite spot and picnic with friends and family any time at Āwhitu Regional Park. Please do not bring your own solid fuel BBQs due to the fire risk of disposing of the hot embers, this includes but is not limited to wood fire, coal and pellet BBQs.

The bookable site includes a BBQ and large shaded area near the main car park and toilets. The Recreation Paddock can be booked for groups of up to 100 people for daytime activities. Conditions apply.

Horse riding

Horse riding is available on the park all year round for holders of a regional parks horse riding permit. Park in the main car park and then head around the campground gate (take the detour track on the right), before following the internal park road until you reach the pond. Head through the gate on your right to access the riding paddocks. Please ensure you spread out your ride lines to minimize pugging.

Campgrounds

Brook Campground

The campground is located behind the Brook Homestead and above Kauritūtahi Beach. An idyllic family campground with plenty of shade,



Visit **aucklandcouncil.govt.nz** or call **09 301 0101** for more information.



shelter and space to spread out, this campground is open to both tents and vehicle based camping.

Head through the locked gate on the right of the main car park and follow the road. Once you pass over the cattle stop you have arrived at the Brook Campground.

Peninsula Campground

The Peninsula Campground offers a more cosy atmosphere and is open to views across the Manukau Harbour. Located on the peninsula above Kauritūtahi and Brook beaches, its am ideal spot to explore the wider park. All camping modes are welcome in Peninsula Campground, however vehicles over 10m are recommended to opt for Brook Campground instead, as turning areas can be restricted when the campground is in high use.

Head through the locked gate to the right of the main car park, follow the road past the cattle stop. Head through the Brook campground following the signage direction to the peninsula campground.

Staying overnight in selected car parks

Āwhitu CSC overnight parking area

CSC Parking is available for self contained vehicles in the main car park. Vehicles must be on site before the main park gate shuts. Summer (day-light savings) CSC Vehicles may stay for 1 night. Winter Special: CSC campervans can stay up to 3 nights in the CSC parking area when the vehicle-based campground is closed. Both Brook and Peninsula Campgrounds allow for all vehicle based camping up to 7 consecutive nights.

Other accommodation

Āwhitu House

Āwhitu House, built in the 1930s, is located just inside the entrance of the park and a five minute walk from the waterfront or two min stroll to the first tee of the Āwhitu golf course (all are welcome). With capacity to sleep up to 6 guests, it is an ideal weekend get away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Bookings

For information and bookings for these overnight facilities, phone **09 301 0101** or visit **aucklandcouncil.govt.nz**

Blue Light Camp

The old Āwhitu Education camp is now run by the Blue Light Trust. Recently refurbished, it is an ideal location for schools, community groups and clubs to get away. Groups can hire just the facilities or work with Blue Light to develop a programme of activities facilitated by their professional instructors.

For bookings and charges please contact Blue Light on **0800 258 354** or **info@bluelight.co.nz**

Feature walks

Brook Homestead Walk

45 minutes, 1.5km

From the car park follow the red way-markers along the foreshore, past the historic Brook jetty and up onto the headland where the Brook Homestead sits amid a glade of trees. The homestead has recently been repainted in its original colour scheme.

Hatton Road Walk

20 minutes, 1km

Follow the blue waymarkers from Hatton Road to the lookout. Then continue to Settlers Valley Walk.

Settlers Valley Walk

1 hour 30 minutes, 3km

Follow the yellow way-markers and you will get to explore most of the park. This walk takes in the wetlands, the two white sandy beaches and climbs up to the viewpoint to take in stunning views of the Manukau Harbour.

Cycling

Settlers Farm Track

1 hour, 3km

Follow the yellow way-markers and you will get to explore most of the park. Watch out for no-go areas through regenerating bush.

Stop kauri dieback

kauridieback.co.nz

A disease known as kauri dieback (Phytophthora taxon Agathis), which is threatening the survival of kauri trees, has been identified at Āwhitu Regional Park. Help prevent the spread by keeping to the defined tracks, using the hygiene stations when provided and cleaning footwear before and after your visit.



Historic jetty



Ranger recommendations

Tips on how to make the most of your visit to Āwhitu Regional Park.

If you have two hours...

For a brief taste of Āwhitu take the five minute walk from the western end of the car park to the pouwhenua (carving) which overlooks the park's wetlands and beaches and the Manukau Harbour.

Return to the car park and head down to Kauritūtahi Bay for a swim near the historic jetty below the Brook Homestead.

If you have half a day...

Choose from a barbecue at Kauritūtahi Bay or walk to neighbouring Brook Beach and find your own peaceful picnic spot. Either beach is great for swimming around high tide and you will have time to visit the Brook Homestead and admire the impressive trees that surround it.

If you have a full day...

Take a leisurely walk or bring your mountain bike to roam around the park and take in all its attractions. Find a fishing spot or enjoy a round of golf at the adjoining golf course. See if there are any fairies at home as you meander through the mature bush along the Kauri Walk.