

WAIMAK GORGE TRIP NOTES

Start Mt White Bridge

As you cross this bridge (you will be running) look downstream and check which channel you should be heading down.

Mt White Bridge to the Power Lines (approx. 20 kms)

Roughly 1/3 of the way down the course the braided section will close in like it is the start of the gorge ... it is not! This section is nearly all braided without bluffs, but amongst it is the three rock gardens which are up against the left hand side (as you look downstream) where the river is eroding away the bank (the river side is approximately 30m high here).

The Power Lines to the Esk River – the start of the Gorge (approx 10kms)

You are now half way, on your left hand side the Poulter and the Esk rivers have come in nearly doubling the flow. This section is nearly all braided but do expect one or two bluffs, as the river at times will come up against a bluff.

The Esk River to Railway Bridge (approx. 15 kms)

You are 2/3rds of the way through the race. The little hut sitting on the right hand side of the river is approximately ½ way through the Gorge, the Railway Bridge is nearly at the end of the Gorge. This section starts with a right hand bluff which then 4-500 metres later leads into a long left hand sweeping bend with a wave chain. From then on it is a series of bluffs with the occasional wave chain.

The Railway Bridge to Woodstock (approx. 10 kms)

You have now paddled approximately 55 kms to Woodstock. Soon after the Railway Bridge, the Gorge opens out changing from more bluffs to more shingle shoots and one or two braided rapids. There are still bluffs in this section. The gradient eases off during this section so it feels sluggish. This is normally the windiest section and probably where you will feel most tired. Keep concentrating, stretch your hands, forearms and legs/ankles. When the first riverside grass flat appears on the left hand side, it is 2 km to Woodstock.

Woodstock to Gorge Bridge – Finish!! (approx. 12 kms)

The river changes back to being braided. This last section is more simple than the top section. Start to look for the big power pylons on the distant hills as they run very close to Gorge Bridge. The last left hand bluff is under the White House on the cliff. There is a right hand bluff on the last corner before Gorge Bridge.

Well Done – You have Finished!!

Helpful Hints

Braided Sections

- Look for volume of water (green)
- Look for biggest V at top
- Look for waves rather than ripples reflecting
- Look ahead as far as possible (like driving)
- Look for vertical sides on the bank – that is the deepest side
- Make up your mind early – stick with your first decision

Bluffs

- Look for your exit point early
- Turn your boat towards your exit point
- Go with the flow (especially on top of boils) don't fight the water

- Paddle hard over boily water
- Make up your mind early – stick with your first decision

Wave Chains

- Keep your boat straight
- Aim to be off to one side of the wave – not through the middle
- Place your paddle on top of the wave and pull yourself through
- Large, strong strokes are more stablising than short ones

Approximate Times

Total	Power Lines (20km)	Esk (30km)	Rail Bridge (45km)	Woodstock (55km)	Finish (67km)
6 hours	1 hr 10 min	2 hrs	3 ½ hrs	5 hrs	6 hrs
5 ½ hours	1 hr	1 hr 50min	3 hrs 15 min	4 hrs 35 min	5 ½ hrs
5 hrs	50 min	1 hr 30 min	3 hrs	4 hrs 10 min	5 hrs