

## OKATAINA WALKWAY WEST

260 Series Map: Rotorua, U16

Topo50 Map: BE37 Rotorua & BE38 Lake Rotoma

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

### How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo on SH 1 North
- At Wairakei follow SH 5 to Rotorua
- Enter Rotorua and at roundabout follow SH30 to Whakatane
- At traffic lights go right on SH30 to Whakatane, next roundabout go straight on
- Traffic lights go straight on SH 30, over mini-roundabout, pass Rotorua Airport
- At Te Ngae go right on SH 30 to Whakatane and pass "Hell's Gate" thermal area
- Pass Curtiss Road on the left, about 1.5km later enter Hapaurau Bay
- Park in car park (**WW01**) on right signposted West Okataina Walkway this is about 1km before the turn-off to Lake Okataina Road

Total driving time is 1:20min to reach the start and the route from Taupo is indicated on the map on the right as the heavier red line. The tramp route is the part between WW01 and WW25 whilst the part west from WW25 is the exit route starting on Millar Road.

**Rough description:** A long tramp of over 21km requiring 6–7 hours with three noticeable uphill sections and overall 897metres of ascent. Distance-wise this is a moderate+ walk but there are no tricky or technical bits and the whole way is on a well formed, wide track that must have been a road in the past and is now an MTB cycleway. Take someone along to talk to as there are no views as such, apart from ferns and trees, though there is a glimpse of Lake Okataina at one point.

**Detail:** Quite a long drive to and from Taupo and a driver / transport mover is required for this A to B walk. The start is easily visible from SH30 NE of Rotorua and, from the small car park (**01302masl**), the start is a 10 minute brutal ascent – so go easy to warm up. Once up the first slope there is an area with some gorse, many birds and you pass under a power line then meet a small junction (**02402masl**). Be aware, especially early on, as there are a lot of junctions and taking the wrong one will end up on Lake Okataina Road or at Lake Okataina. One such junction comes up after 50 minutes where the track heads downhill via an eroded stream line and where there is poor GPS reception.

Soon there is an open area or amphitheatre named the "Bull Ring" (**05356masl**) and a climb is required to get up out of here so go "slow and steady" looking at and following the several signs at the various junctions noted. After an hour go right at the Y-junction (**06377masl**) on the Rongomai Track followed by a steep zig-zagging ascent. One of the noticeable features of the forest here is the size of the tree ferns – they are huge. Next feature is the sign Okataina at a T-junction (**07422masl**) where the route goes right then stay straight at the next T-junction (**08431masl**) where the Te Auheka Track goes off. Within 2 hours the open area with buildings of the Okataina Outdoor Education Centre is reached – this is a good place to stop off for a refreshment break.

### Giant tree ferns



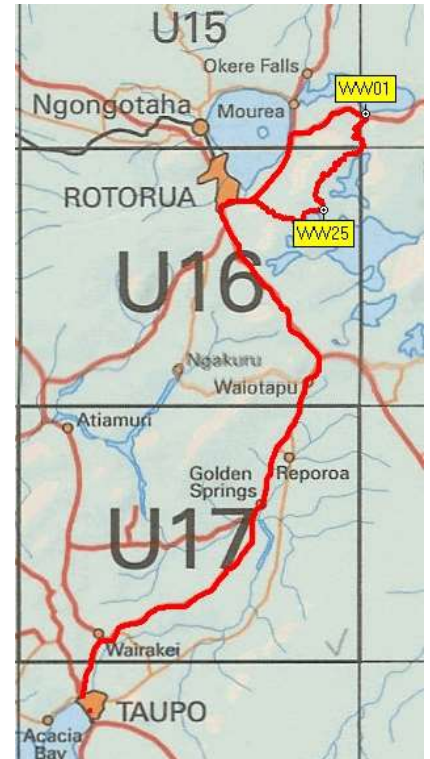
Leave the outdoor centre area passing through the archway (**09429masl**) with informative notices following a wide grass track noting the 2 junctions that occur within 10 minutes (**10 & 11**). For the next 30–40 minutes there is an uphill grunt with an easier section (**12580masl**) after 20min and then after more hard work and in 3:15min there is an awesome dead Rata in the sky above (**15707masl**). It is just before the turn-off to the Whakapoungakau trig the tri (**15b758masl**) which offers little in the way of views when the cloud is down but good ones on a clear day (the side trip takes 30–40min). An open meadow then suggests itself as a lunch spot (**16692masl**). As they say "it is all mostly downhill from here on" with very few notable features.

### Awesome Rata



One feature that cannot be missed is signposted for the bikers, but still pay attention as the stream line – the second branch of the Rereoterangi - (**17482masl**) in question can be tricky to cross since the logs can be slippery when wet. There are a couple of small incised stream lines and a wooden bridge (**19456masl**) plus several very useful white plastic posts with kilometres-to-go clearly marked – the first being at 7km (**18490masl**). Just past the 6km post (**20466masl**) the track is on a wide shelf above a deep valley on your right then it bends to the left and goes uphill with grassy, bare-looking hills on the right.

### Access



### Notice board at outdoor centre



### Tricky streamline crossing



**Map and Google Image with GPS data**



Cross a small stream (21470masl) then on the wide open track pass through more good forest plus ferns. The 5km post (22487masl) is on an uphill, then there is a minor junction (23504masl) on the right. The track is a bit eroded and the 4km post (24528masl) is near the crest of a long eroded slope then it is a bit wet and soggy underfoot and a deep valley lies to the left.

There is deep forest litter on the track at the 3km post (25568masl) which comes up at about 5:50min from the start. There is a Y-fork (26556masl) where the route goes right and 20 minutes later there is an open flat area heading for the car park on Millar Road (27466masl). The post at 2km was missed as was the one at 1km. On the most recent outing the marker posts were not as easily found.

**Awesome tree near trig junction**



From : 07-Nov-12 08:55:52  
 To : 07-Nov-12 15:08:09  
 Time taken : 6:32:17  
 Total Distance : 23.600 km  
 Minimum Speed : 0.000 KPH  
 Maximum Speed : 5.115 KPH  
 Average Speed : 3.304 KPH  
 Minimum Altitude : 301 Meters  
 Maximum Altitude : 737 Meters



**Trig station**



The Trig station has a large communications mast and control hut with explanatory notices.

## GPS Data and NZTM Waypoints



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	1900497	5782541	302	Car park on SH30 southern edge of Lake Totoiti
02	1900675	5782081	420	15min (0.6km); small track junction soon after slope eases at top of brutal uphill start. Head SW
03	1899293	5780947	455	50min (2.93km); on narrow ridge at small track junction, go left and downhill
04	1899282	5780630	395	60min (3.49km); in eroded stream line area with very poor GPS signal heading SE
05	1899470	5780538	356	1:05min (3.74km); In the middle of "Bull Ring", quite heavily overgrown
06	1899658	5780412	377	1:10min (4.29km); Y-fork, go right for Education Camp
07	1899418	5780166	422	1:25min (4.75km); junction signposted for Okataina, right for Education Centre
08	1899809	5779567	431	1:46min (6.08km); Te Auheka track goes off to right
09	1900090	5779505	429	1:55min (6.41km); archway on lower edge of Education Centre compound, track notices and info boards
10	1900099	5779156	414	2:10min (6.83km); T-junction, head straight ahead to the south
11	1900289	5778776	425	2:15min (7.28km); T-junction, turn right and start gentle ascent
12	1899934	5778249	580	2:35min (8.18km); at minor crest after long (20min) grunt up hill
13	1899504	5778075	601	2:40min (8.62km); almost level section on fairly narrow ridge
14	1898904	5777868	695	3hours (9.43km); level area after another hefty grunt uphill
15	1898197	5777790	707	3:15min (10.22km); Whakapoungakau Trig junction beneath awesome dead Rata
15b	1897839	5778373	758	3:40min (11.44km); Whakapoungakau Trig 15 - 20 min uphill from junction (If you go)
16	1898007	5777233	692	3:45min (10.99km); small grassy meadow area (Distance if you miss out the Trig)
17	1896398	5775913	482	4:40min (14.39km); tricky stream crossing of second branch of Te Rereoterangi Stream on logs
18	1896369	5775782	490	4:45min (14.54km); 7km to go marker post on RHS of track
19	1895894	5775336	456	4:55min (15.34km); small wooden bridge
20	1895750	5775419	466	4:57min (15.52km); 6km to go marker post
21	1895511	5775133	470	5:02min (16.23km); small stream line
22	1895343	5774911	487	5:12min (16.53km); 5km to go marker on upslope section
23	1895257	5774869	504	5:14min (16.63km); small junction off right, continue straight to the SW
24	1894939	5774142	528	5:27min (17.54km); 4km marker on section liable to being boggy
25	1894631	5773428	568	5:51min (18.69km); 3km to go marker damp area of forest
26	1894679	5773004	556	5:57min (19.05km); Y-fork, go to right to enter open grassy area in 20min or so
27	1895507	5771394	466	6:33min (21.60km); end of track car park on Millar Road 2km NE of Lake Okareka

### Halfway



### Nearly there



If variations are wanted then there are alternatives:

- Start at the top of the track and include the 2.4km diversion to the Trig – this gives a more challenging 24km
- Start at the top of the track and miss out the 2.4km diversion to the Trig – this is the 21.6km option
- Start at the Education Centre (there is good road access of Lake Okataina Road) and include the Trig giving almost 19km
- Start at the Education Centre and miss out the Trig giving just over 16km or 10 miles

Notes:

- **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 60CSx / GPSMap 62sc
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level