

## WAIPAKIHI VALLEY

**260 Series Map:** Ruapehu, T20

**Topo50 Map:** BH35 Turangi

**How to get to START** Exit Taupo down the lake on SH1

Straight through Turangi (SH1) on to the **Desert Highway** for +/- 19 km passing both the turn off to Umukarikari and the road quarry on the left.

Turn left off Desert Highway on road signed **Waipakihī Road** which has potholed asphalt surface

Park (**WR01**) on RHS just before steep downhill about 3.5 – 4km from highway  
The approximate location of the walk is shown opposite as the green line just below the junction from sheet T19 to T20

**Rough description:** An easy, if somewhat wet, tramp of 4 – 5 hours up the Waipakihī River and back. The walk is wet because there are about 14 river crossings to be tackled. This number increases the further the tramp is extended. There is a track in many places though it is not too distinct but walk direction is relatively simple as it follows the river. The access from the Desert Highway plus GPS track of the walk can be seen on the map.

There is an altitude loss of just over 50 metres from the car park down to the first river crossing then a gradual gain of the same amount walking up the valley to the point reached on this outing. Total walk distance inwards, as mapped, is 7.6km (GPS) giving over 15 km for the round trip.

**Detail:** From the car park (**WR01**) start walking steeply downhill on the surfaced, asphalt road and in 5 – 10 minutes branch off right (**WR02 790**) on gravel road / track parallel to river on a level, rather wet (in season) old track. There are a few up-and-overs through the bush to avoid the worst of the eroded edge. The old car park area (**WR04**) is reached in 20 minutes with a sign back to start showing “Two Wheeled Car Park” – two wheels being assumed to be feet as only a pretty special vehicle could reach this point following the route walked.

### Downhill start



### The old car park



### Eroded area



From the old car park enter the bush on RHS, immediately passing a picnic table in a small campsite and soon the going is rather rough on the slope whilst working round the massive eroded edge of the river which is shown above. When working round the eroded river section ensure you do not walk too close to the steep, eroded river bank – it is a long drop to the river. After about 30 minutes the “path” makes the first river crossing (**WR05**) – the first of many feet-wetting crossings on the day’s walk. Here there is an area of utter devastation caused by a massive flood plus landslip – see photo below. Lots of deer tracks seen and many hunters seen in season – be careful and NOT too quiet, they shoot at things that move.

### Devastated area



There are really few features of note and most waypoints taken serve as time-checks as an aid to progress. However, after about an hour whilst walking on the south bank below a gravelly bluff look out for the breather pipe (**WR09**) sticking up. This “breather” is from the Moawhango-Tongariro Tunnel (head-race for the power station) that lies buried below. The cement collar on the pipe gives some indication of the amount of river-bank erosion there has been.

The track keeps crossing and criss-crossing the river and eyes have to be kept open for tell-tale signs of the track – there are no markers. There are also many small “hunters” campsites such as found after about 70 minutes (**WR10**).

### Breather pipe



During dry spells it can prove quicker to walk up the middle of the gravelly bed of the river (**WR14**) but do not attempt this if there is the chance of rain – the flow looks calm but is really quite strong in places. The only other features of note are the several wide, low terraces covered in river gravel and boulders and often with a large number of washed-down trees (**WR15**) – this indicates that things can get wild in this valley.

### Strong current



Vegetation on this tramp is quite lush with:

- Beech (Silver and Red)
- Totara – Mountain Totara
- Kamahi
- Manuka
- Rimu and Miro
- Some ferns
- Some 5-fingered Coprosmos

### Nearly back!



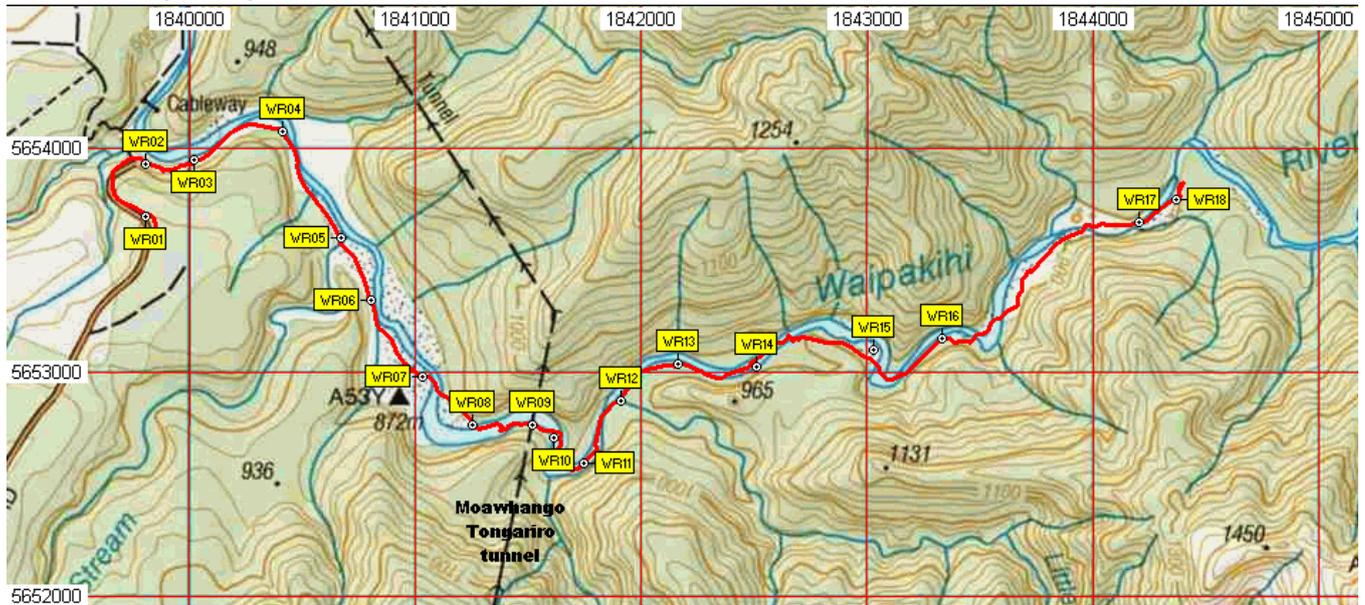
**NZ Grid GPS:** Geodetic Datum 49

**NZTM GPS:** NZTM on WGS84

**Access**



## Map and Google Image with GPS data

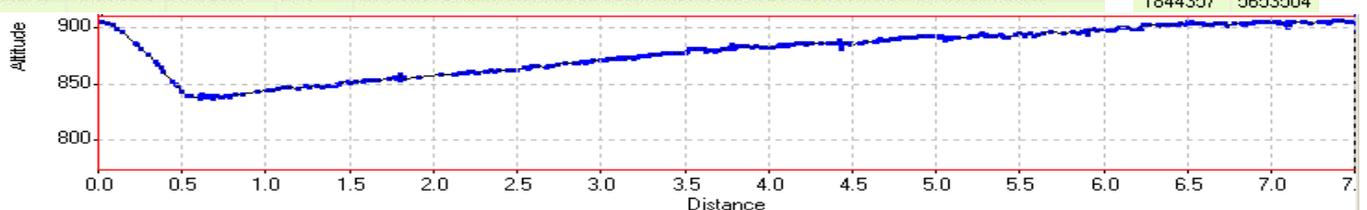


### Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
WR01	2749857	6215342	896	Park on East side of Waipakihī Road at top of hill near gravel road junction
WR02	2749857	6215580	790	10min; Branch off road on dirt road to right along river after steep descent on pot-holed asphalt
WR03	2750076	6215595	840	15min; Wet, muddy track along badly eroding river bank - care needed
WR04	2750466	6215721	847	20min; Sign for 2 wheel car park before entering bush
WR05	2750723	6215251	854	35min; First river crossing of side stream from the SW (right)
WR06	2750856	6214967	859	40min; Out of the bush into the river and over
WR07	2751084	6214629	865	45 min; Large gravelly low terrace then cross river again
WR08	2751306	6214414	871	55min; Steepish drop after open gravelly track back into the water
WR09	2751572	6214409	875	1:05min; Breather for Moawhango Tongariro Tunnel
WR10	2751665	6214353	869	1:10min; Campsite with fireplace (huge rocks) before river crossing
WR11	2751799	6214238	880	1:20min; Probably the seventh river crossing
WR12	2751960	6214522	881	1:35min; Minor side-stream from the SE
WR13	2752214	6214681	886	1:50min; Ninth stream crossing?
WR14	2752563	6214673	887	2hr; If river low, move to mid-river bed and walk upstream. If higher water stay on N bank
WR15	2753078	6214747	896	2:15min; Large bouldery, gravelly area with many washed down trees
WR16	2753385	6214796	898	2:30min; Time check
WR17	2754256	6215317	903	2:50min; Time-check
WR18	2754418	6215418	903	3hours; Stream line narrows, heavily over-grown and track not-obvious. Lunch and turn

### NZTM

Easting	Northing
1839793	5653424
1839793	5653663
1840012	5653677
1840402	5653804
1840660	5653334
1840793	5653050
1841022	5652712
1841244	5652497
1841510	5652492
1841603	5652436
1841737	5652321
1841898	5652606
1842152	5652765
1842501	5652757
1843016	5652831
1843324	5652880
1844194	5653402
1844357	5653504



The round trip back to the car park on same route as above is 5 hours with lunch and morning tea stop; +/- 4.5 hours.

### Notes:

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