

UPPER MATAKUHIA HUT

260 Series Map: Whirinaki, V18

Topo50 Map: BG38 Wairapukao & BH38 Te Haroto

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

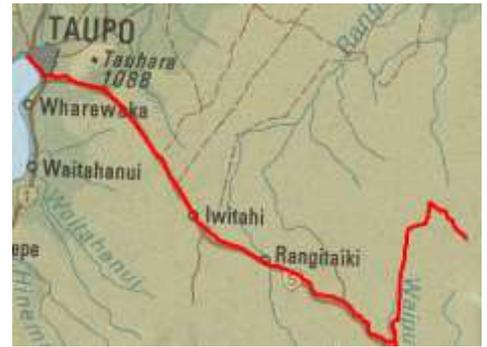
NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo on **SH5** for Napier
- Straight on through Rangitaiki
- 40 minutes turn left on to **Pohokurua Road**
- Cross bridge to **T-junction and go left** on rough forest road
- About 1 hour pass through mature coniferous forest
- 1:05min go **right at T-junction**. This used to be signed left for SH5 on the way out, keep eyes open
- 1:07min bear right at next T-junction passing Circuit Road
- Go right on **Pine Milling Road**
- 1:15min go right on **Pine Milling Road at Y-fork** whilst Plateau Road goes to the left
- 1:20min park (**WP001**) at **Matakuhia Saddle** cross roads

All times and distances from Taupo Police Station on Tongariro Domain

Access



The alignment of SH5 and the route into the Matakuhia Saddle can be seen opposite. However it should be noted that there is an alternative route into the start via High Level Road but permission is required to go this way. The routes are of equivalent length and require the same time – on the assumption that the forest road is not washed out (In 2013 one bridge was swept away)! The route of the tramp on the map where it will be noticed that the alignment of the track agrees well with the mapped track..

Rough Description: A moderate tramp through very thick, mature native forest on a back-country track – a bit of a challenge in places but with some fantastic giant trees to admire. The track is downhill on the outwards direction losing just over 300 metres overall but the return, though uphill, is easier than might be expected with moderate slopes. The track can be badly overgrown and care is needed not to trip over the invading flax which also hide erosion damage at the side of the track with large drops to the valleys below. There are many new loose slip slopes to cross and these do require caution. Just on 8km in each direction which can be covered in 2 to 3 hours by competent trampers meaning that the target hut is a good lunch spot.

Detail: From the cross roads on Matakuhia Saddle (**WP1969masl**) the eroded forest road heads off gently downhill to the south and within ten minutes an open area (**WP2946masl**) is entered; this was the site of the Saddle Hut. The track goes off to the left and immediately narrows and can be badly over-grown with flax, ferns and other invasive vegetation with a sprinkling of windfalls to add to the fun.

There is a steeper downhill section after about 15 minutes (**WP3913masl**) but the half-expected grunt up out of this dip does not happen since the track continues downhill parallel to the stream line and soon offers huge views of the valley ahead. Much of the walking is quite tricky as the path is often just a narrow shelf on the steeply sided valley and the invasive vegetation plus numerous windfalls offer several opportunities for trips-ups with a risk of actually falling off the path in places.

The worst of the descent and challenging path is over within the hour and the stream has been crossed, on a very solid, wide tree bridge (**WP4772masl**) which is covered with chicken wire to offer safe footing – the stream flow is generally low and the bridge not used. After this the track does improve somewhat but at around 1:15min (**WP5778masl**) massive landslips can be seen on the opposite side of the river. Fifteen minutes or so after this the walking is much easier with the track being wider, in much more open forest and slopes not at all taxing as it passes close to a very fast flowing stream – the water flow seems much faster than the slopes would suggest it should be (**WP6734masl**).

Heavily overgrown track



Tree bridge or wading



Upper Matakuhia hut

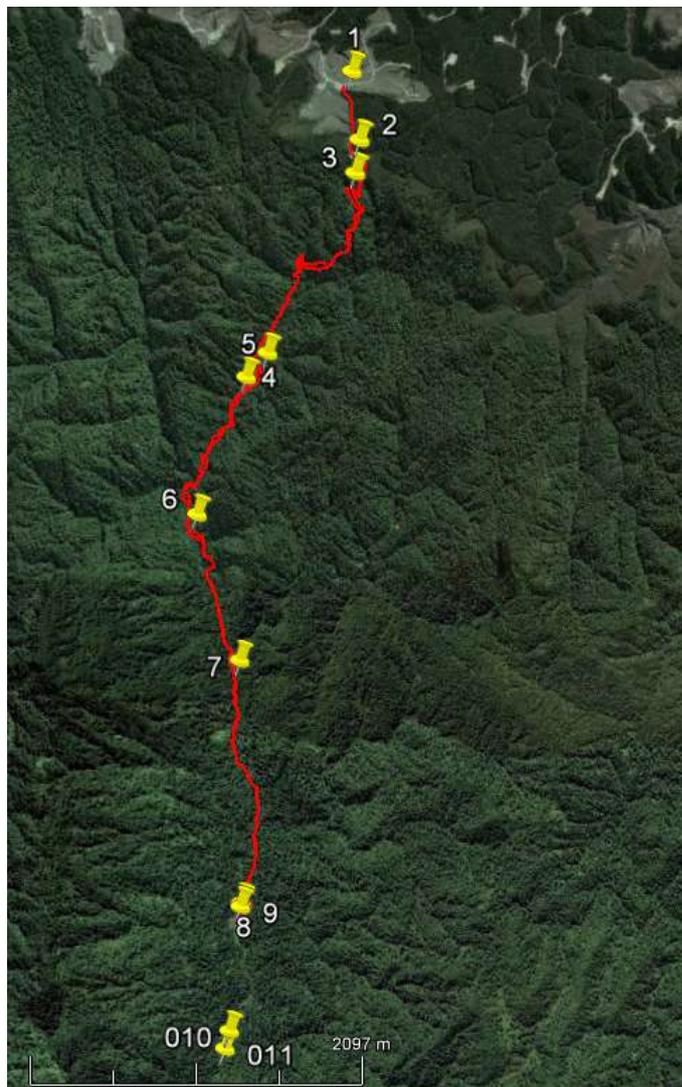
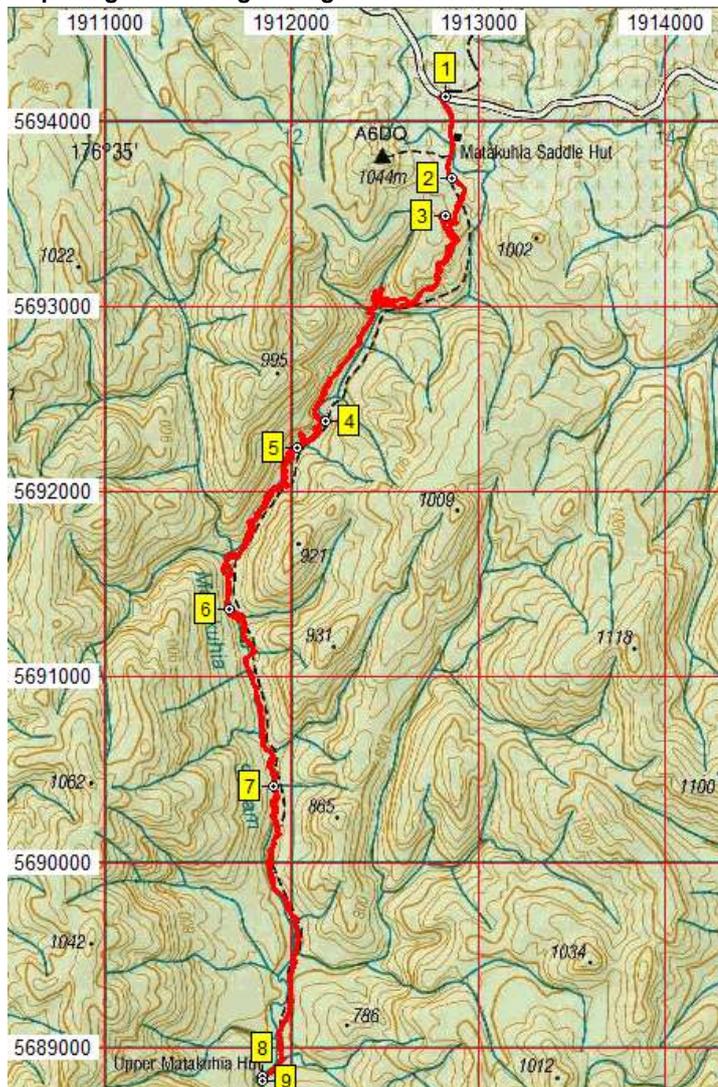


Slopes remain pretty well non-existent and a wet, boggy area is traversed at just on 2 hours (**WP7718masl**) and there are a few feet wetting possibilities with the odd stream crossing. Twenty minutes or so after this the forest thins, a tussock area is entered and the Upper Matakuhia Hut awaits just round the corner (**WP9692masl**). The hut is in fair condition – lift the door as you try to enter – and has 8 bunks, workbench, wood-burner and an external sink. The water supply is the stream a few metres away whilst the DOC toilet is on the slight rise behind the hut; the notice attached to the loo states that the “load” for the loo is one person!!

The track continues towards the Lower Matakuhia Hut with a sign that claims 5.6 hours are required to get there – this was disputed by one member who had tried it as the track was poor and not at all well marked. As a check a post-lunch wander showed a very wet slip area (**WP10690masl**) about 25 minutes out whilst the track was less obvious as it passed close under some bluffs about 30 minutes out (**WP11690masl**).

There were signs of pigs rooting about and digging up the track and in clearings so it is assumed the area would be favoured by hunters. No obvious signs of track maintenance but foot traffic keeping it clear.

Map Image and Google Image with GPS data



Waypoints – NZ Grid

N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
1	2822886	6255891	969	Park at cross-roads at Matakuhuria Saddle on Pine Milling Road
2	2822917	6255453	946	10min (0.5km); open area and site of the old Matakuhuria Saddle Hut
3	2822877	6255248	913	15min (0.9km); steeply downhill then walk parallel to stream line with huge views of valley
4	2822234	6254148	772	55min (2.7km); after long descent on shelf-like path cross stream on tree bridge
5	2822082	6254002	778	1:15min (3.2km); reasonable track with huge landslips on opposite side of the stream line
6	2821723	6253132	734	1:40min (4.4km); on good, almost level track at edge of fast flowing stream
7	2821958	6252178	718	2hours (5.5km); very wet, boggy section
8	2821903	6250612	692	2:24min (7.3km); open tussock area
9	2821896	6250588	692	2:25min (7.4km); Upper Matakuhuria Hut
10	2821800	6249793	693	25min beyond hut - wet slip area
11	2821773	6249684	690	30min beyond hut - turn back in narrow, steep sided area with badly damaged track ahead

NZTM

Easting	Northing
1912830	5694131
1912861	5693693
1912822	5693487
1912180	5692385
1912027	5692239
1911668	5691368
1911904	5690414
1911851	5688846
1911844	5688822
1911749	5688026
1911722	5687917



Notes:

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

Total Distance : 8.930 Km
 Minimum Altitude : 682 Meters
 Maximum Altitude : 994 Meters