

## PUKAHANUI to OKAHU ROAD

**260 Series Map:** Whirinaki, 1:50,000 V18

**Topo50 Maps:** BH38 Te Haroto, BG38 Wairapukao, BG39 Ruatahuna

### 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 left** on rough forest road
- About 1 hour pass through mature coniferous forest
- 1:05min go **right at T-junction** signed for SH5 on the way out
- 1:07min bear right at next T-junction passing Circuit Road
- Go right on **Pine Milling Road**
- 1:15min right on **Pine Milling Road at Y-fork**, Plateau Road goes left
- 1:20min pass crest of **Matakuhia Saddle** cross roads
- 1:35min park just before locked gate opposite sign for **Upper Te Hoe Hut** (4 hours), track going off steeply uphill on N side

*All times and distances from Taupo Police Station on Tongariro Domain*

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!

**Rough Description:** A moderate+ three day tramp through very thick, mature native forest on back-country track – a bit of a challenge in places but with some fantastic giant trees to admire. There are several rather neat huts for over-night stops and refreshment breaks. Day 1 is classified as easy to moderate and requires 4 hours or less to cover the 11km to the Upper Te Hoe Hut. Day 2 is hard work with one 250metre non-stop grunt, superb walking on a shelf track cut into the bluffs for the stout of heart and the 17 odd km require about 7 hours with over 650m of ascent and descent to reach the Mangakahika Hut. Day 3 is moderate+ on distance alone with the GPS records showing just over 20km with 500m of descent and 300 of ascent covered in about 8 hours walking.

**Detail: Day 1- the easy day:** From parking at the road side (**WP01** 808masl) walk a few metres back up the road and get on to the signed track heading NE up the hill. The track is immediately recognisable as a back-country one with tricky bits, over-grown patches and wash outs but still allows good progress. Within 10 – 12 minutes there is a sign (**WP02** 799masl) indicating direction – assumed this was erected when the track was possibly realigned. There is an indistinct Y-fork (**WP03** 845masl) ten minutes later where the route is left and, again, there is a track sign as the slope increases a bit on this well defined track. Within an hour or so the forest is entered.

About 2 hours up the track after a moderately long ascent parallel to the valley a well defined “helipad” (**WP04** 1163masl) is entered after a bit of a grunt over the last section of the hill-climb. There are good views from the helipad. It should be noted on study of the map that the existing track has a totally different alignment from the mapped track. Twenty minutes after this the track from the Upper Whirinaki Hut joins from the left (**WP05** 1166masl) and again this is a fair distance from the junction as mapped.

There is now a long section of winding track with several valley heads on the right (SE) side before a pretty grunty set of zig-zags (**WP06** 861masl) are tackled but there is then respite with a fair descent. Around 4 hours there is a clear T-junction (**WP07** 768masl) with the Central Te Hoe Hut signposted off right some 7.2km and 5 hours distant. Carry straight on at this junction and it is minutes to the Upper Te Hoe Hut (**WP08** 767masl).

### Upper Te Hoe Hut



This is a good hut with 9 bunks, a wood-burner plus ample supply of firewood, table, seats and cooking bench. There is outside sink with a roof-water supply.

### Interior of Upper Te Hoe Hut



**NZ Grid GPS:** Geodetic Datum 1949

**NZTM GPS:** NZTM on WGS84

### Access to start, return and tramp route



Road access **BLUE** – tramp line **RED**

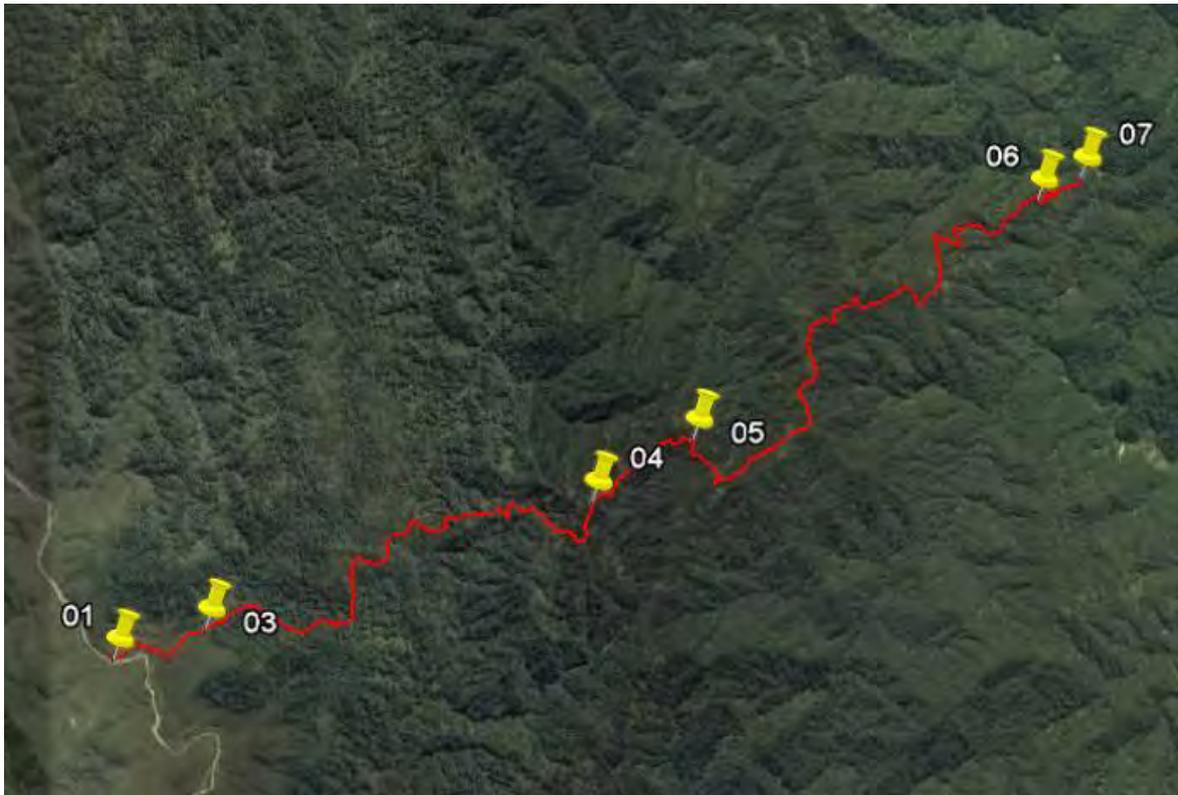
### Heavily overgrown



### Helipad



# Map and Google Image with GPS data: Day 1

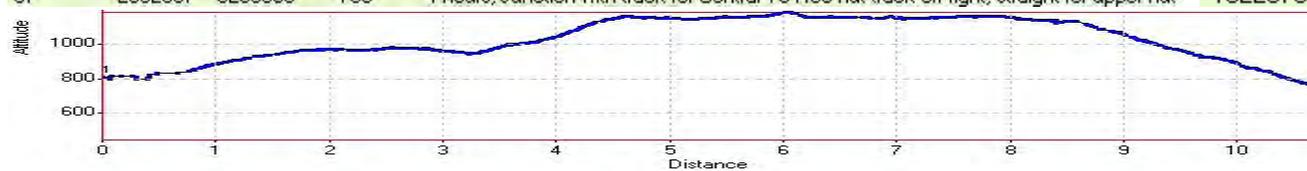


## Waypoints NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	2827075	6253348	807	Park at edge of Pine Milling Road just before locked gate
02	2827328	6253377	799	12min; Track sign indicating new routing of track NE
03	2827623	6253505	845	21min; Faint Y-junction at "track" sign
04	2829939	6254165	1163	2:05min; Helipad with views after long grunt upwards
05	2830551	6254507	1166	2:20min; Junction with Upper Whirinaki Hut track from the left (NW)
06	2832648	6255840	861	3:45min; Well up wicked zig-zags then fair descent
07	2832907	6255960	768	4 hours; Junction with track for Central Te Hoe hut track off right, straight for upper hut

## NZTM Grid

Easting	Northing
1917039	5691516
1917292	5691545
1917588	5691673
1919906	5692336
1920518	5692680
1922615	5694015
1922875	5694136



**Day 2 – the hardest day:** From the hut backtrack to the junction (**WP07** 768masl) turn left and follow the sign for the Central Te Hoe Hut at 7km and 5 hours away; this is on a small over-grown track with an indistinct junction after 5 minutes (**WP9** 750masl) where, by going straight, a small eroded path is found that crosses a bridge then ascends. Twenty minutes later on the ridge crest there is another T-junction (**WP10** 910masl) with an indistinct track off right – fifteen minutes to the left and the track becomes road width and good progress can be made.

After more gentle ascent there is yet another T-junction (**WP11** 1009masl) with an open area to the right – this could be a helipad – whilst going left soon leads to a descent on a wide track. The GPS trace shows that the original mapped track is now more or less followed and in about 1:30min total there is a descent to the SE on a very gnarly, root infested narrow ridge in beech forest with a lot of horopito. After this there is a 10 minute upwards grunt followed by easy walking on the level ridge (**WP13** 1084masl). At the end of the ridge there is a knee-testing descent on a very steep slope to meet a wide track (**WP14** 737masl) with an easy grade where the route goes to the right. Ten minutes on this super-wide track, with one of the smallest track markers ever seen, leads to an open area (**WP15** 663masl) -another possible helipad? - then on to a shelf chiseled into the bluff face. The next part of the track really is amazing as the shelf works its way along the face of the rocky bluff. There is a steel rope well anchored to the rock face for those that lack confidence and prefer some support.

#### Narrow rocky shelf



#### Fly on the wall



A few sections of the path are covered in rubble from collapses above and one or two parts of the actual shelf have fallen away – caution is required. Soon after the shelf there is a T-junction (**WP16** 527masl) with a sign indicating the Central Te Hoe Hut (**WP17** 516masl) is only 5 minutes off to the right over a swing bridge. The central hut is big with 17 bunks in two dorms, a large wood-burner in the middle of the communal / kitchen area which has a table, large cooking bench and indoor water supply at the sink. Outside there is a flash new composting toilet.

After lunch at the hut, back-track, cross the bridge and head off uphill to the right (NE) parallel to the stream line through an area with a lot of Punga and onga-onga (Stinging nettles). About an hour out from the Central Hut cross a bridge (**WP18** 555masl) and commence a long upwards grunt on a narrow back-country track finally arriving at a level area with a deer fence and information boards on the right (**WP19** 639masl). At a bit over 5 hours there is a sign (**WP20** 676masl) that advises that Central Hut is 1:30minutes behind you whilst the Upper Hut is 5 hours behind.

#### The impossible bunks



Soon after this there is an open area of grassy flats with a picnic table and where the track is not well marked so follow upstream to re-locate the markers. The grunt of the tramp now commences and a rise of about 250metres lies ahead. There is a very distinct turn opposite a horse-tailed waterfall (**WP21** 815masl) and almost level walking is again attained (**WP22** 910masl) after a really wicked set of zig-zags upwards. At around 7 hours the hut is signed as being about 5minutes away from a T-junction (**WP23** 751masl) to the right over a bridge. There then follows the only bit of muddy walking on the whole track as the route passes through some very wet, low lying land before reaching the Mangakahika Hut (**WP24** 757masl).

The hut is a spitting image of the Upper Te Hoe hut apart from the totally nonsensical bunks! There are nine bunks and the lower three are quite normal but the middle and upper rows are almost impossible to get into and out of unless one is very small and agile or fellow trampers can stop laughing long enough to help get a normal sized person into the very limited headroom space allocated. The nice new composting toilet is also somewhat spoiled in that there is no way the door can be closed as it was made from unseasoned timber and is badly bowed. Otherwise this is a delightful hut in a pleasant setting.

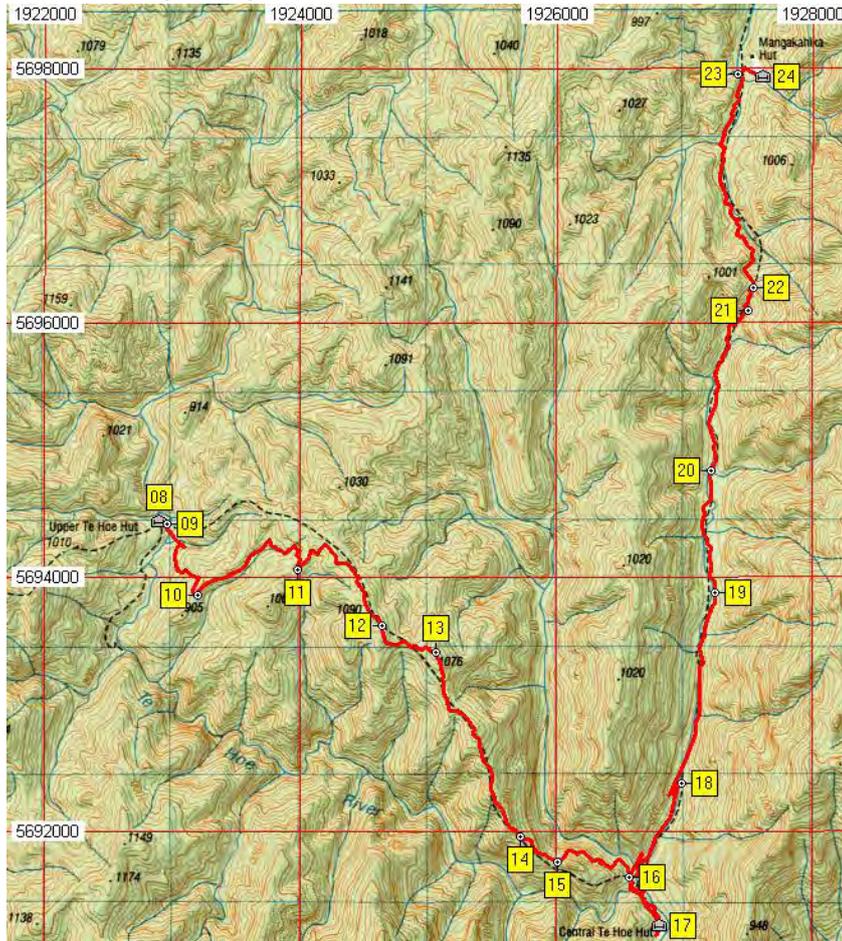
#### Cost saving DoC track marker



#### Interior of Central Te Hoe Hut



## Map and Google Image with GPS data: Day 2



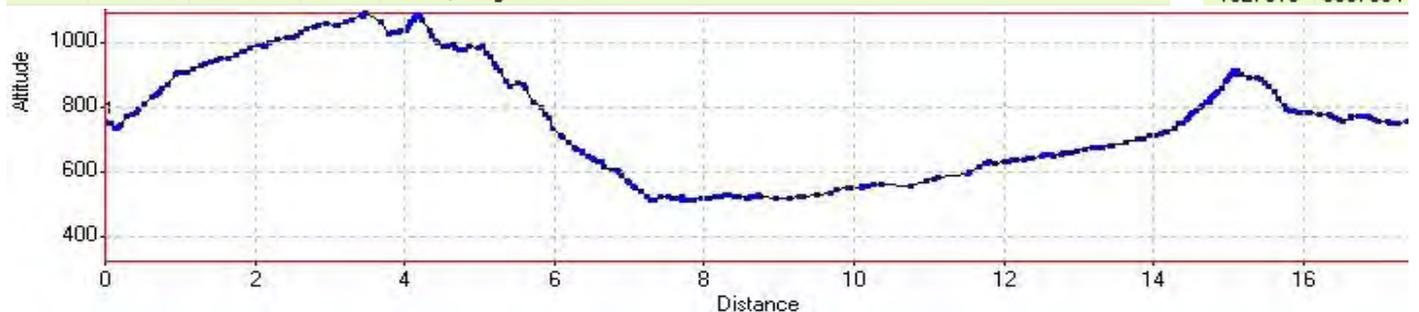
From : 08-Jun-09 14:35:45  
 To : 08-Jun-09 14:35:45  
 Minimum Altitude : 514 Meters  
 Maximum Altitude : 1090 Meters  
 Total Distance : 17.370 Km

### Waypoints NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
08	2832918	6255998	767	7:50am Exit Upper Te Hoe Hut
09	2832981	6255978	750	5min; Small, indistinct Y-junction - go straight to eroded path then bridge
10	2833210	6255416	910	25min; Crest of ridge at T-junction with minor path off right. Fifteen min later track is road width
11	2833996	6255616	1009	50min; T-junction with open area off right as possible helipad. Ten min later descend on wide path
12	2834651	6255164	1077	1:25min; Heading downslope on gnarly narrow ridge with beech plus horopito then 10min grunt up
13	2835076	6254960	1084	1:45min; Easy walking on level ridge
14	2835737	6253512	737	3hrs; Very steep descent to T-junction, going right on wide easy grade track
15	2836023	6253315	663	3:10min; super wide track to open (helipad?) area then on shelf chiselled into bluff face
16	2836583	6253190	527	3:35min; T-junction with 5min to Hut sign then over swing bridge
17	2836822	6252807	516	3:40min; Central Te Hoe Hut
18	2836987	6253935	555	4:45min; Bridge then non-stop upwards on narrow back-country track
19	2837256	6255428	639	5:20min; Deer fence / enclosure with info boards on RHS
20	2837224	6256384	676	5:45min; Sign with Upper Te Hoe 5 hours and Central Te Hoe 1.5 hrs then grassy flats
21	2837510	6257639	815	6:20min; Sharp bend on huge upwards grunt and opposite horse-tailed waterfall
22	2837548	6257827	910	6:40min; almost level walking after wicked zig-zag grunt upwards
23	2837433	6259503	751	7:15min; Hut signed at 5 min on T-junction, then over bridge and wet muddy area
24	2837640	6259480	757	7:20min; Mangakahika Hut

### NZTM Grid

Easting	Northing
1922886	5694173
1922949	5694154
1923179	5693591
1923966	5693792
1924621	5693341
1925048	5693136
1925710	5691688
1925996	5691490
1926557	5691366
1926797	5690983
1926961	5692112
1927229	5693607
1927196	5694564
1927481	5695821
1927519	5696008
1927403	5697687
1927610	5697664



**Day 3- the long walk day:** As on the day before, start by back-tracking through the wetland and over the bridge before heading north and it has to be said that there is not an over-abundance of excitement ahead, but there is plenty of evidence of the windfall damage created in the storms of 2006. There are endless areas that are still totally choked by windfalls but luckily DoC have now managed to clear and re-establish the track – in fact in some places there is major work going on but that is mainly in connection with creating a cycle route into and around the Moerangi Hut.

To : 08-Jun-09 15:50:31  
 Minimum Altitude : 542 Meters  
 Maximum Altitude : 762 Meters  
 Total Distance : 20.041 Km