

## HAUHUNGATAHI to MANGAHUIA

Topo50 Map: BH34 Raurimu and BJ34 Mt Ruapehu

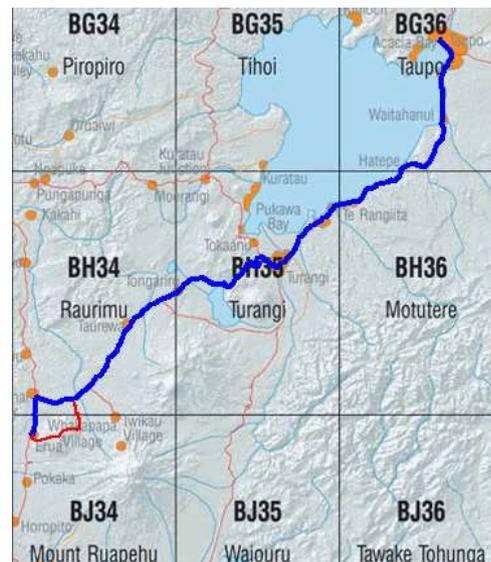
GPS: NZTM on WGS84

### How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo southwards on **SH1** to Turangi
- In Turangi use **SH41** towards Tokaanu and turn left to **SH47**
- Pass the turn off to Whakapapa in 1 hour
- Turn left on to **SH4** at National Park in 1:15min
- Pass the Lodge Motel on the right then the old prison on the left before crossing the railway line in 1:20min
- Turn left to Erua Road at the Crossing Backpackers and park at the road end (**01748masl**) just short of the railway line.

*Times and distances from Police Station, Taupo*

**Rough Description:** A walk which fits in to the 'fit' category as it does involve a fair bit of hard bush bashing. Starts at Erua near National Park and the route uses a very overgrown, underused track which has a brutal first section in that it goes steeply uphill through dense forest. Once the bush-line is reached the going is easier but still tough as the slope is still significant as it passes through rough tussock type vegetation and bog. The final ascent is easier as it is rocky to reach the Trig point (**111523masl**) in about 3 hours. From the summit it is bush bashing NNE then E, off-track to hit the Mangahuia Stream to pick up the track from Whakapapa.



The route described on the left is shown above

**NB** It should be noted that access to the track has now (2019) been blocked at the start at Erua.

### Erua and railway from start

**Detail:** From the parking spot (**01748masl**) which is near the riding school arena and a huge shed set off south on the right hand side of the railway track – walking is easier this side. After 5 minutes or so keep a wary eye open across the rail-track for the weather-beaten, faded wooden track notice indicating the start of the walk (**02751masl**). The first part of the track is usually so over-grown it can be a struggle to get through – flax and other scratchy type bushes - and it soon become quite steep plus many roots threaten to cause trip ups. Then the heavy vegetation lessens and really nice forest is entered – but the slog uphill continues. There are many large native species including Cedar and Totara. A minor track junction is passed (**05818masl**) in about 20 min whilst the slope does ease a bit after about 50 minutes (**06992masl**). The first indications of the bog ahead appear after about 1:20minutes (**071132masl**) when the slope really does ease and pools plus muddy patches are encountered.



### Track notice – if you can see it



### Thick bush with Old Baldy in distance



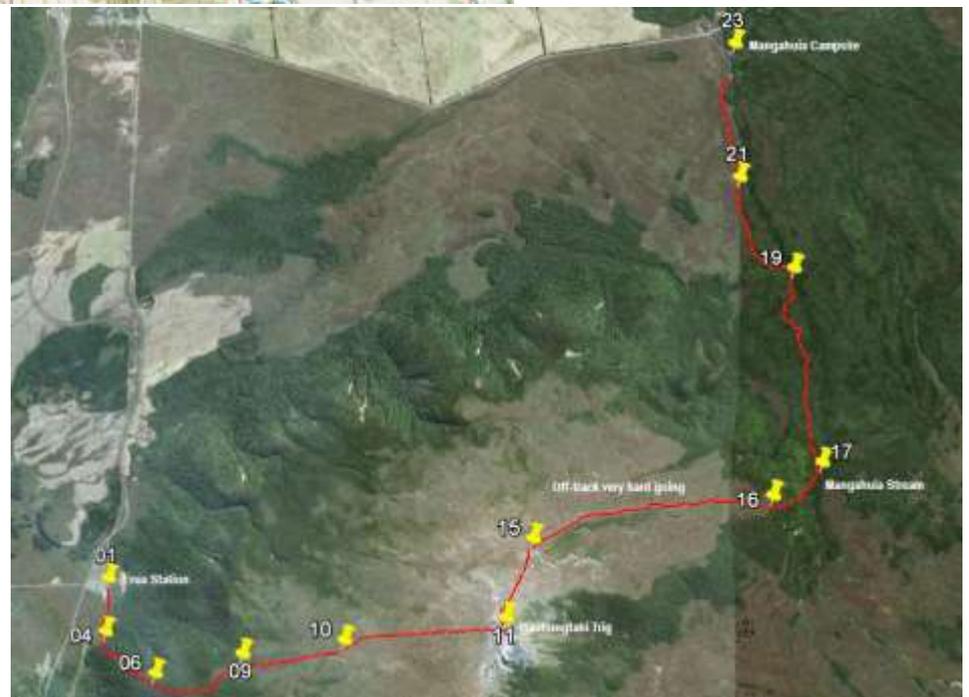
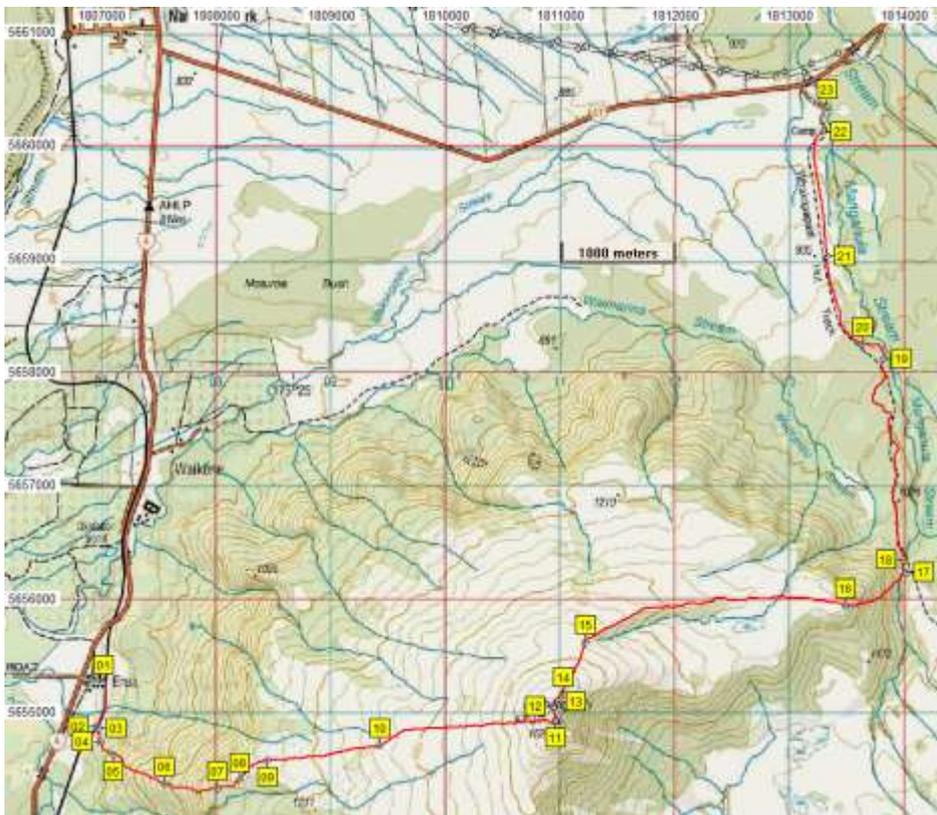
A perfect spot for a refreshment break is found in an open area with quite a large bog pond (**081152masl**). After this there are actually poles marking the track but, since these are old and very faded, they are not too easy to spot and would be impossible to see on overcast or low-cloudy days. Care must be taken whilst traversing this next area as there is a lot of bog and many, well-hidden quite deep holes for the unwary to stumble into. The track is also very vague and easily lost – especially on the return. Within the forest area there was reasonable bird-life with Grey Warbler and Cuckoo being heard whilst out on the moor / boggy area the high-level skylark (Pipit) was very obvious. Visibility does improve (**091173masl**) the further one walks and a fair view of the target hill is soon seen plus views of Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe are also obtained. After enjoying the low bush there is then a small section of more dense, higher scratchy bush to pass through.

The view is then much more open, the bush is lower – with a lot of carpet daisy – but it is still tricky, tiring walking as the surface has a lot of tussock, eroded areas and bog holes. Pass to the N of a small rocky knob (**101271masl**) then after about 2:30minutes the slope increases as the conical top of Hauhungatahi is approached. The last few metres involve rock-hopping to reach the trig point (**111523masl**) and from here it is only a few minutes wander to get to another top which offers good panoramic views.

### Trig with Ngauruhoe behind



The aim from the Trig (**111523masl**) is to hit the bushline at WP16 and traverse down the spur to the NE to intersect the mapped track just after it crosses the Mangahuia Stream. Easier said than done as there is no track and a choice has to be made whether to head for the spur on the N side (true left bank) of the Waimarino Stream (**WP15**) or head directly to WP16 trying to maintain the high ground adjacent to the bushline so as to avoid the flat, boggy section. On either route travel across the spongy ankle high vegetation requires great care to avoid knee and ankle twisting.



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1807023	5655259	748	Park vehicle at Erua Siding, walk south by railway. Access blocked in 2019
02	1806960	5654882	751	8min (400m); Cross railway towards first track marker after walking south
03	1806978	5654857	753	10mins (0.45km); First track marker in scrub on eastern side of railway
04	1806994	5654742	782	14mins (0.57km); Enter bush above scrub
05	1807105	5654634	818	19mins (0.74km); Subtle track junction with track coming in from south
06	1807551	5654370	992	50min (1.33km); Slope easing after fair grunt up heavily overgrown poor track
07	1808018	5654329	1132	1:16min (1.82km); Slope eases and first of boggy sections and pools
08	1808205	5654405	1152	1:22min (2.03km); First open area above bushline, track marker poles ahead
09	1808454	5654583	1173	1:49min (2.35km); Out onto open scrub
10	1809435	5654707	1271	2:14min (3.42km); Pass to north of small knob
11	1810964	5654930	1523	3:00min (5km); Hauhungatahi Trig
12	1810945	5655052	1504	3:37min (5.21km); Pole
13	1810988	5655097	1490	3:39min (5.29km); Second pole
14	1811027	5655151	1484	3:40min (5.35km); Rocks, choice: NNE via valley head on Waimarino Strm or go E via flat (boggy) area
15	1811227	5655624	1380	3:55min (5.89km); Change from NNE to NE bearing
16	1813492	5655948	1246	4:51min (8.34km); Thick bush, choice: Route was down to stream but could have gone on ridge to NE
17	1814015	5656234	1035	6:08min (9.01km); hit Mangahua Stream and head N
18	1814005	5656345	1028	6:34min (9.14km); track crosses Mangahua Stream
19	1813820	5658117	964	7:05min (11.18km); South end of boardwalk section in very boggy area
20	1813639	5658244	957	7:10min (11.49km); small stream crossing in mixed tree and shrub area
21	1813329	5659024	933	7:21min (12.34km); north end of long boardwalk in wetland area
22	1813292	5660120	892	7:45min (13.5km); leave gravel road and go on small track for minutes to reach car park
23	1813327	5660345	884	Car park with toilet and DOC shelter at Mangahua campsite

On the day from the Trig (**11**<sup>1523masl</sup>) the bush bashing began with the aim of getting from waypoint **11** to be just on the true left bank of the Waimarino Stream (**15**<sup>1380masl</sup>) after passing through the valley head ; en-route two poles were passed (**12** and **13**) the a small rocky patch (**14**<sup>1484masl</sup>) was reached. From the Trig (**11**) there are some 740metres to traverse on a magnetic bearing of 356 degrees, if one is using a compass rather than a GPS. This route was preferred since it holds as much height as possible since in this area anything mapped as flat or nearly flat will without doubt be boggy.

From **WP15** the true left bank of the stream was paralleled heading to the NE then swing round more to the east before eventually crossing the stream in a virtually flat area to reach **WP16**<sup>1246masl</sup> which is just where the slope down to the Mangahuia Valley starts. All of this recent area traversed is covered in very “unfriendly” thick bush and progress can be painfully slow and often with blood, sweat and tears involved. On the day from **WP16** the party was pushed eastwards downslope into the steep, well incised valley of the Mangahuia with thick scrubby bush infested with bush lawyer – very unpleasant – to arrive at the stream.

One variation could have been to follow the snout of the ridge down from **WP16** to the NE to intercept the track just north of where it (the track) crosses the Mangahuia Stream. If the true right bank of the Waimarino Stream had been followed the track might have been intersected earlier before it crosses the stream – it is not recommended to try and use the stream bed at any point as the footing is treacherous and wet feet or worse inevitable .

On hitting the Mangahuia Stream (**17**<sup>1035masl</sup>) the route is N for 100metres to arrive at the point where the track from Whakapapa crosses the stream. In dry weather with low stream flow the Mangahuia Stream is easy to cross but if it is wet it can prove quite difficult as the crossing point is at a confluence and, in this area, rainfall does not seem to infiltrate to the soil and high run-off occurs quickly building up the water level. However the crossing can be safely negotiated but wet feet are guaranteed. After crossing it is only 5km or so to the campsite but be warned it can feel like the Everglades with very swampy conditions – there may not be any alligators but there are hazards, such as deep holes in the middle of the pond one is wading through.

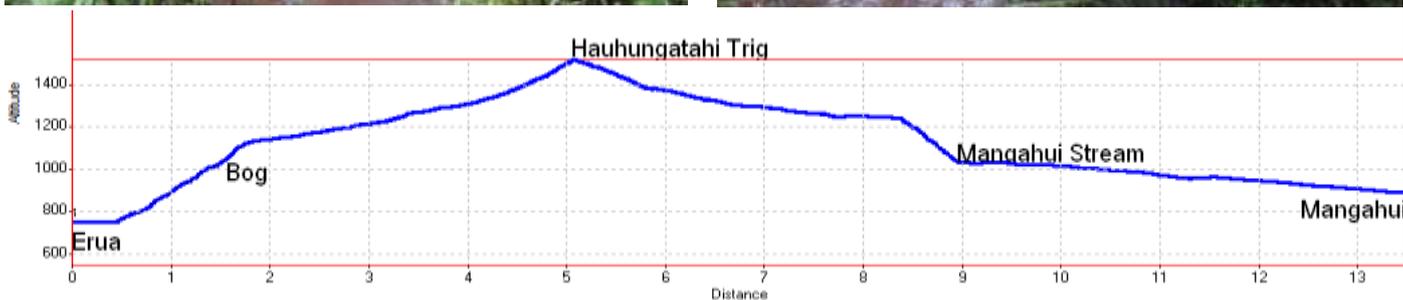
At around 11km (**19**<sup>964masl</sup>) there is a very welcome section of boardwalk, but it can be treacherously slippery, whilst around 12km there is yet more boardwalk. After this the track slowly improves until one is again walking on terra firma and quite soon the gravel road is reached then a small track is followed (**22**<sup>892masl</sup>) which means the campsite and car park (**23**<sup>884masl</sup>) are just ahead

**Can be like the Everglades**

**Crossing the Mangahuia in wet weather**



**This is the track in wet weather**



<b>Notes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPS = Garmin GPSMap 62s</li> <li>• WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS</li> <li>• MASL = metres above sea level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total map distance: 13.5km</li> <li>Minimum Altitude: 748masl - Erua</li> <li>Maximum Altitude: 1523 masl - Trig</li> </ul>
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