

TONGARIRO RIVER WALKWAY

Topo50 Maps: BH35-Turangi

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi:

- On crossing the bridge over the Tongariro River immediately pull into the carpark on the right hand side of the road
- There is normally a caravan parked there selling coffee – a treat when the walk is over

Rough description: A very easy, pleasant walk southwards on the true right bank of the Tongariro River to cross to the true left bank on one of a couple of bridges to return to the bridge in Turangi. Views that are not normally seen are available and the 14km or so offer a fair workout without being onerous. Allow 3 to 4 hours for the round trip without hurrying.

Detail: Turn left out of the car park (**01378masl**) and walk back over the bridge whilst having a look at the river, bluffs and, usually, several fly fishers dotted around below. The walkway is clearly signed on the eastern side at the north end of the bridge (**02385masl**) and starts off uphill on a semi-sealed gravel track to get up and over the small hill with the edge of the hill being the bluffs on the river edge. There has been a great deal of clearing and planting of native species all along this track – views are good all around. Within around 40min there is a seat (**03388masl**) at a gravel dump close to the now unused cableway over the river.

Bluffs on the south side of the bridge



Minutes further on the eastern end of the Major Jones swing bridge is reached (**04389masl**) which can be used by those wanting a shorter walk. After about one hour (**05406masl**) an impressive stand of Firs is passed through – it was thought they were Douglas Fir. To avoid confusion the next two points are noted in that an old track goes off then re-joins again within a hundred metres or so (**06401** & **07406masl**).

Tongariro River to the north



There is a very good view point from the bluffs over the river reached in around 1:30minutes (**08430masl**) and this makes a good point for a refreshment break. A hundred metres beyond here there is a Y-junction (**09429masl**) where bikes go left and walkers can and bikes cannot go right – there is a flight of very steep steps to descend. This descent ends up at the Red Hut Pool Bridge which is crossed (**10421masl**) then a car park on the edge of SH1 is accessed via some steps.

Eastern end of Major Jones bridge



After wandering roughly parallel to SH1 in a northerly direction for half an hour the walkway skirts the National Trout Centre (**11413masl**) – the first indication of the centre is the manicured nature of the sealed track heading off to the right downhill – but do not follow this as the walkway route is signposted going north on the edge of the car park. At around 10km the track is obviously older comprising hard packed earth with sharp turn (**12411masl**) to the right signed Loop Track & Kutai Street carpark.

Above the Red Hut Pool bridge



Either of these tracks can be followed, the Loop is the shorter one. The first choice should be to head downhill for a few hundred metres to meet a T-junction (**13393masl**) and turn to the left to soon meet another junction – again going left to soon meet up with the Loop Track which comes in from the left (**14391masl**). Most of the track is now obviously older and not surfaced, all old fishermen's tracks, and at around three hours or so the western end of the Major Jones Bridge (**15390masl**) is passed.

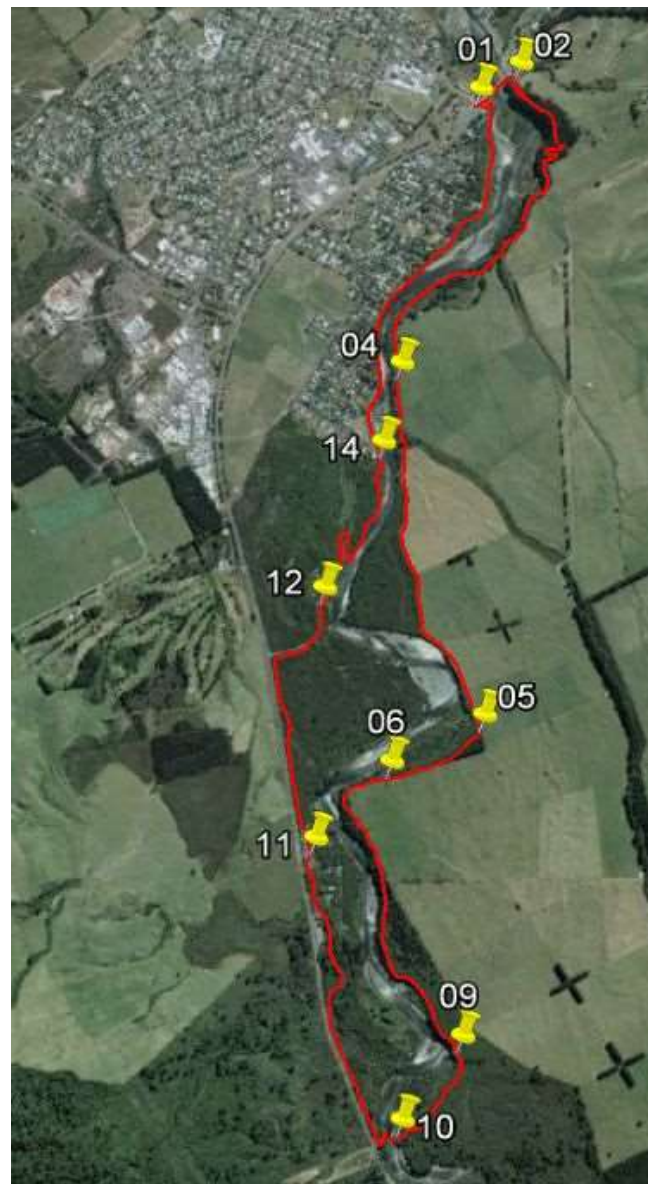
Major Jones Bridge



Just after this there is a good view of the old cableway over the river then the route wanders along passing many rather attractive houses and gardens, grassy access areas to the walkway until after three to four hours a glimpse can be caught of the Tongariro River Bridge at Turangi and the end of a very pleasant walk. The whole outing is about 14km long with next to no hill-work – only 176meters ascent during the whole outing.

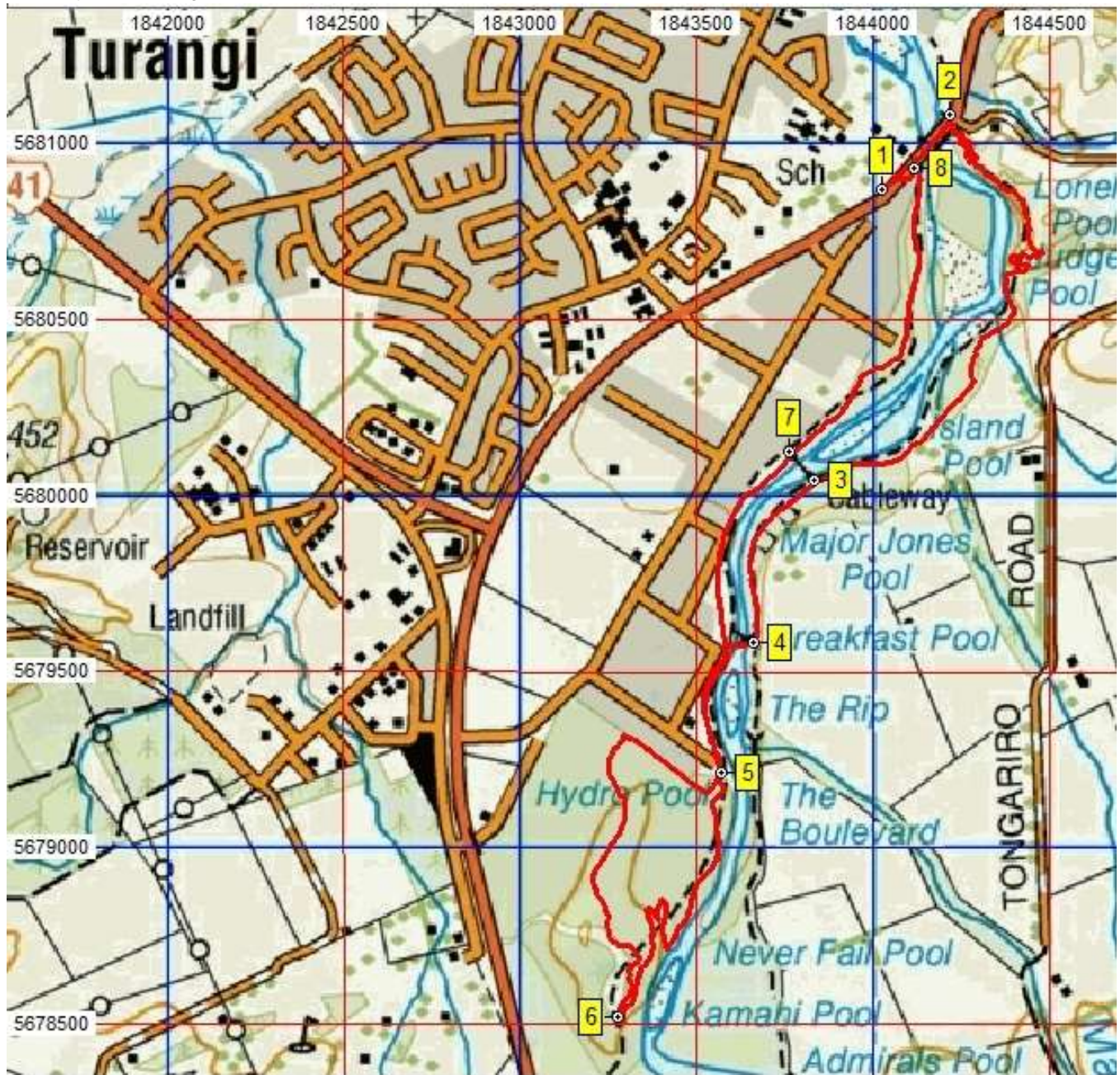
Old Cableway





Na...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	2754152	6242733	378	Coffee stop car park Turangi
02	2754346	6242850	385	265metres (3:40sec); Start of trail then uphill on sealed gravel bike track
03	2753761	6241503	388	2.5km (41min); Seat plus gravel dump near old cableway river crossing
04	2753747	6241406	389	2.6km (48min); Eastern end of Major Jones bridge
05	2754093	6239696	406	4.4km (1:11min); Impressive stand of fir trees - Douglas Fir?
06	2753654	6239487	401	4.9km (1:17min); Y-fork with older track off left
07	2753573	6239473	406	5km (1:18min); Old track rejoins from the left
08	2753882	6238266	430	6.5km (1:37min); Good view point on bluffs above bend in the river
09	2753952	6238173	429	6.6km (1:56min); Y-fork with bikes off left whilst walkers go straight then down steep steps
10	2753664	6237786	421	7.2km (2:07min); Red Hut Pool bridge then up steps to carpark at edge of SH1
11	2753292	6239134	413	8.8km (2:35min); Walking parallel to SH1 in to Trout Centre, follow signs at edge of carpark
12	2753364	6240329	411	10.2km (2:56min); On older track, sharp bend to right signed Loop Track & Kutai St carpark, downhill
13	2753508	6240539	393	10.7km (3:04min); T-junction at bottom of descent left to another T and left again
14	2753652	6241026	391	11.3km (3:12min); Loop walk rejoins track from the left (The Loop is shorter)
15	2753675	6241400	390	11.7 (3:16min); Western end of Major Jones bridge on wide, beaten earth track

If a slightly shorter walk is wanted in this area there is a loop track that can be used. The Wairaki Loop Track is located on the true left bank of the Tongariro River but is easily accessed from either the East or West tracks. As described, on the day access was via the true right bank track for 2.5km then crossing to the other bank via the Major Jones swing bridge. One word of warning – although the signage is pretty good there is room for confusion at the end of the loop when the main track is re-joined. It is a pretty tight turn to ensure you are headed in the correct direction NNE – if you find you can hear then see road traffic you are heading south away from Turangi.



Name ▾	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
1	1844024	5680870	374	Public car park with coffee cart Turangi
2	1844214	5681078	378	Walk back 280m over bridge and turn left to go under bridge
3	1843834	5680042	379	2.15km (40min); At disused cableway after fairly steep 138m ascent descent
4	1843657	5679581	385	2.71km (50min); Right to cross Major Jones swing bridge
5	1843569	5679214	385	3.18km (60min); Right to follow signposted Wairaki Loop Track
6	1843278	5678519	404	4.53km (1:24min); End of loop at confusing junction - head basically NNE
7	1843759	5680124	379	6.79km (2:20min); Level embankment at disused cableway
8	1844112	5680927	375	7.78km (2:3min); Cross SH1 to get back to starting car park

Notes:

- **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 60CSx
- **masl** = metres above sea level