

# WHIRINAKI UPPER HUT and TAUMUTU STREAM

Topo50 Map: BG38 Wairapukao

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, left at **T-junction** on forest road
- About 1 hour pass through coniferous forest
- 1:05min **right at T-junction**. This is signed left for SH5 on the way out
- 1:07min right at T-junction passing Circuit Road
- Right on to **Pine Milling Road**
- Left on to **Plateau Road** – straight on
- Car park with toilet (**WP01**)

Access to the starting point on Plateau Road is not too easy and use of the map or, better, someone who knows the way acting as a guide is a good idea.

**Rough description:** This is a pretty hard, 17km tramp on badly over-grown tracks in to the Upper Whirinaki Hut then onwards following the Taumutu Stream to meet the Whirinaki–Central Hut track.



The drive to the start is shown as the **BLUE** line above  
The tramp route is shown by the **RED** line

Depending on time of year, time available and fitness, it is only a few kilometres to head north to the Central Hut but think about this as there is still quite a long way to go outwards passing and visiting the “cave”. After the cave it is a bit of a grunt back up the hill to the Plateau Road car-park and overall there are over 700 metres of ascent and descent.

**Detail:** Assuming that the car park (**WP01** 942masl) has been found after about 1 hour 30 minutes’ drive from Taupo, exit downhill through the archway where there is a notice board and map of the area. Within 10 minutes a stand with the track log-book and T-junction with a notice (**WP02** 924masl) indicating right for the Upper Whirinaki Hut is reached – the main path for Central Hut goes straight ahead. The track now goes from tourist grade to back-country, is immediately a bit steep and can be badly overgrown indicating it is not over-used. The path does improve a bit after about half an hour when a down-slope has been descended and then the terrain becomes rolling to hilly. There is a longish descent to a water-shed saddle from where many dead forest giants can be seen off to the right, then after an hour there is a bit of a tricky descent to another col or saddle with a possible, vague track going off left but the route goes straight ahead. From here a long gentle ridge with many huge native trees descends to the north east until a sign-posted junction (**WP04** 677masl) is reached. Turning left here heads for the Central Hut – but not recommended (DoC notice) due to many windfalls.

## River crossing



The route crosses the Whirinaki River here and care is required as the current can be quite strong. The notice board claims only 10 minutes to the Upper Whirinaki hut but the numerous (7 in all) stream crossings can extend this time to nearer 30 minutes – doing this tramp in dry weather does help. There is a track notice on the edge of the hut clearing (**WP05** 692masl) some 50m before the hut. The hut (**WP06** 693masl) is modern, has 9 bunks, wood-burner, roof water supply, external sink and the toilet appears to be on a bit of a pedestal. This hut is maintained by the Rotorua branch of the NZ Deerstalkers Association and DoC.

## 10 minutes to Hut sign



## Upper Whirinaki hut



A slight weakness in the sleeping arrangements does exist as there are roof support beams a matter of inches above the top, middle bunk – a child might manage but an adult would struggle. From the hut head back to the track notice (**WP05**) from where the track heads northwards up a steep bank initially then ascends up a dry valley. About 20 minutes gets to the crest which can be badly churned up by rooting pigs – then it is a long descent parallel to a deeply incised stream on the left through rather thick vegetation which contains a great deal of “hook-grass”.

## Top middle bunk



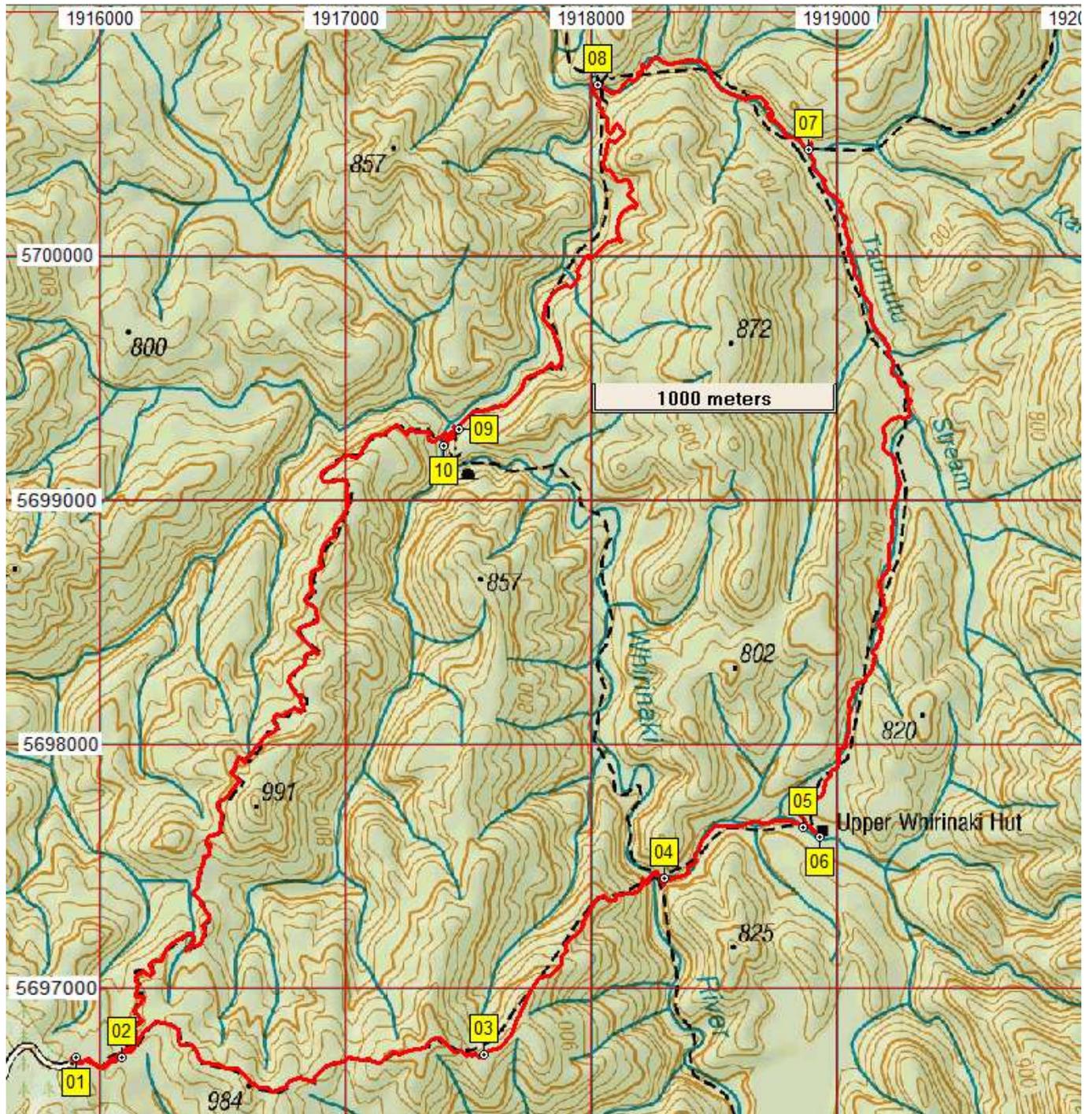
## River work



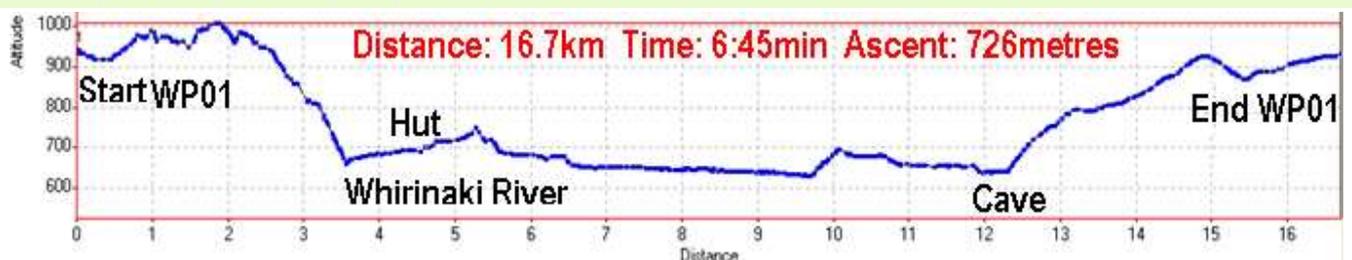
Once off the downwards slope there seems to be less hook-grass, the vegetation is less dense but a big drop-off to the stream on the right was noted. This stream is followed for another thirty minutes and the track eventually enters the Taumutu Stream which becomes the route – more wet feet. After almost an hour of splish-splashing the sign (**WP07** 629masl) for the Mangamate Hut can be seen across the other side of the stream but the route of the day continues straight ahead with even more river walking as this is route and not track.

## More wet feet





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1915905	5696720	942	Car park at Plateau Road end of Whirinaki Track
02	1916091	5696718	924	10mins (274m); Track junction with track log book, go right and uphill
03	1917566	5696725	993	1hour (2.15km); Crest for morning tea
04	1918296	5697452	677	2hours (3.57km); Track junction at Whirinaki River and 10min from Upper Hut
05	1918864	5697659	692	2:15min (4.32km); Track sign for Mangamate Hut at edge of Upper Hut clearing
06	1918932	5697619	693	2:18min (4.41km); Upper Whirinaki Hut
07	1918884	5700434	629	3:45min (7.88km); Track junction for Mangamate Hut for lunch on Taumutu Stream
08	1918026	5700704	604	4:40min (9.37km); Bridge on main Whirinaki track
09	1917462	5699290	627	5:20min (11.73km); Bridge over the Whirinaki River just before turn-off to the Cave
10	1917401	5699225	629	5:25min (11.88km); Entrance to cave, then long (4.8km) slog uphill back start in 6:45min total time





As stated above the route is now much more of an indicated route rather than a track – much of the stream bed is well clogged with windfall plus wash-down logs and other debris. The route now slowly swings round to the NW then W before arriving at the bridge and junction for the Central Hut (**WP08** 604masl).

It is possible to head for the Central hut for a quick visit but this should be carefully considered if this is a wise decision as it is still a bit of a hoof (about two hours) out from this point back to the starting car-park. If heading for home, cross the bridge and immediately enjoy dry feet and a bit of a grunt uphill. Thirty to fifty minutes or so later meet another junction (**WP09** 627masl) and a swing bridge over the Whirinaki River, cross the bridge whilst keeping an eye open for Blue Duck.

Immediately on crossing the bridge there is a small Y-junction with the “cave” sign-posted off to the left. It is worth spending 5 – 10 minutes having a look at the cave (**WP10** 629masl) - but have your torch handy to help spot the Weta which live here. It is literally a couple of minutes down the track but the cave can be tricky to find – there is a very small stream line coming in from the right in the middle of a very heavily grassed area – walk upstream for a few metres to find the cave entrance. Once out of the cave and back off the spur track the really hard part of the day commences as it is a long, uphill grunt back to the archway and car-park at the start of the track (**WP01**). Progress is being made when the track log-book (**WP02**) is again encountered.

#### Overgrown track and signs



#### Fantastic forest



**Notes:** GPS Garmin GPSmap 60CSx WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit masl = metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS)