

WAIHOHONU SPRINGS

Topo50 Map: BJ35 Waiouru

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo down the lake on **SH1** through Turangi on to the Desert Highway (SH1) for just over 15 km

- Turn right off Desert Highway just after the Rangipo Intake Road on the left onto gravel, motor track signed **Waihohonu Track**
- Drive in the few hundred metres and off-load in the car park (**WP01**^{978masl}).

The route to the start can be followed opposite and takes about one hour driving.

Description: A relatively long, fairly taxing walk of 5-7 hours of almost 20km which can be considered in sections and it should be noted that the location of the Springs is incorrectly marked on the Topo50 maps:

1. From the car park (**WP01**^{985masl}) near the desert road into the Waihohonu Hut (**C** is an easy, if somewhat boring, walk taking between 1:15 and 1:30 min. This part is only boring if you have done it several times as the view of the mountain is great on clear days and there is some interesting, current gully erosion to study.

2. From the Waihohonu Hut (**WP10**^{1101masl}) there is a bit of a climb up the Oturere Hut track but the slope eases once the track is left (**WP04**^{1254masl}) to follow the ridge NW towards Tama

3. There is no track here but the walking is pretty good though stony and bouldery in places

4. At the upper end of the ridge (**WP05**^{1251masl}) it is then necessary to get down into the Waihohonu Valley which runs parallel to the ridge. This involves a bit of a side heading steeply downhill on loose gravel but then swinging t NW (**WP06**^{1134masl}) to keep out of the difficult terrain offered in the boggy tussock area. The going then improves with gravel and boulders before reaching the springs (**WP07**^{1181masl}).

5. The route out can be the reverse of inwards but it is simpler to head upslope almost due S to get back up on to the ridge and once on the ridge head SE to soon recognize features seen on the way in – WP08 is very close to WP04.

6. From here the route is the reverse of the inward walk and is straightforward soon getting back down to the Waihohonu Hut (**WP10**^{1101masl}).

Detail: The walk in to and out from Waihohonu Hut can, if done often, become a bit of a boring “blast” but it is not taxing and the chance to stretch the legs does exist at the start and end of the day. Features are the view of the mountain, a bridge 20 minutes after starting, some spectacular erosion of bits of the track and a view of the track a long way ahead. “Blasting” it takes just over an hour but relaxed walking gets you to the hut in about 1:30 minutes.

From the palatial Waihohonu Hut the track to Oturere is clearly marked as it heads down a flight of steps, over a metal bridge to pass through the DoC campsite with toilet then steeply uphill to pass the location of the older, now demolished Waihohonu Hut and from here things get a little bit steep. The views of Ngauruhoe from this steep uphill section can be fantastic so look up at times. After about 30 minutes from the hut there is a minor crest (**WP04**^{1254masl}) and the route bears left off the marked track and continues up the ridge to the NW towards the Tama Ridge. There are vestiges of a path in places and the ground cover changes as tussock becomes stony and boulder covered in places – it can be windy on this section. Approximately an hour from the hut there is a very large “obelisk” shaped boulder from where a sandy, scree slope can be seen leading down into the valley on the right (N). Going down the scree slope is no longer the preferred inward route as it ends up in bog, tussock and fast flowing stream lines offering wet feet – follow the mapped exit from the springs instead.



The Boulder



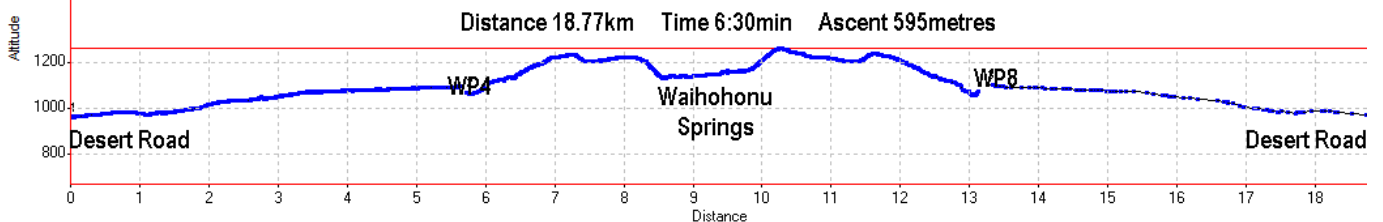
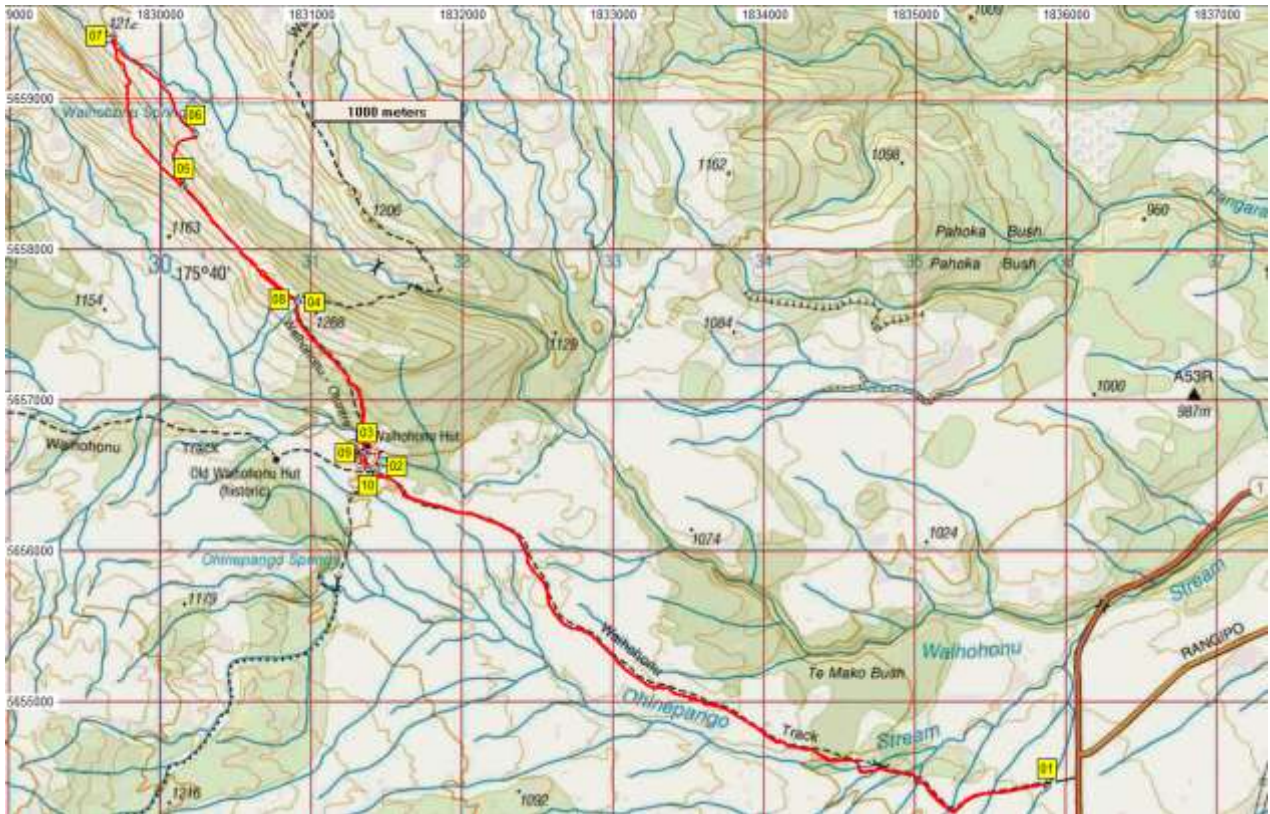
The bubbling spring



Off track up Tama Ridge

ON the way out slightly more adventure can be had by heading up and over the small hill above the springs to get on to the true left bank of the Waihohonu stream-line and heading downstream to the SE. Most of the walking is easy as it is mainly gravel fan but there is a lot of bog and several stream lines to cross. At some point you must cross to the true right bank and continue - but the going does get a bit rough in places till eventually there is no option but to head, steeply uphill to the right. This is hard work being fairly steep in woodland but quite soon the Oturere track is intercepted – head uphill to the right (W) on this. From here it is about 20 minutes downhill to Waihohonu Hut via the new metal bridge just past the campsite in the valley.

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1835880	5654435	978	Park at Waihohonu car park 100m off Desert Road
02	1831452	5656562	1094	1:32min (5.62km) - old unmarked track crossing present track, right goes to old wooden bridge
03	1831373	5656667	1099	1:45min (5.86km) - site of the Old Waihohonu Hut
04	1830908	5657651	1254	1:50min (7.03km) - post smoko on Oturere track, turn left on to vague track on Tama Ridge
05	1830154	5658420	1251	2:15min (8.13km) - small cairn marking point to head N off ridge on to scree slope with mini gully
06	1830232	5658775	1134	2:25min (8.58km) - as slope eases head NW on contour to avoid boggy tussock area
07	1829695	5659423	1181	2:56min (9.52km) - edge of Waihohonu Springs after boulder hopping section
08	1830911	5657670	1252	4:30min (11.85km) - very small indistinct track turning off more or less N (original track) near WP4
09	1831347	5656651	1090	4:48min (13.04km) - notice at camp site, DOC toilet on track to Waihohonu Hut close to metal bridge
10	1831375	5656550	1101	4:55min (13.26km) - new Waihohonu Hut with picnic bench



Notes: GPS Garmin GPSMap 62sc
 WP Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
 masl metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS unit and may not agree exactly with map spot heights)