

WAIPAPA TRACKS

Topo50 Map: BF34 Benneydale, BF35 Whakamaru

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo northwards on **SH1** and turn off at the top of Control Gates Hill left to Poihipi Road. The route is to follow Poihipi to the end, turn right on SH32 to Whakamaru then left on SH30 towards Mangakino then left again heading for Benneydale. At about one hour (70km) turn right into Ranginui Road, which is gravel, and go for about 1.5km then turn left into a car park area.

Rough Description: This is classified as a “fit” grade of tramp as it does take about 8 hours, is mainly on “routes” not tracks and the area has in the past suffered a great deal of windfall so there is endless clambering over trees – some of them absolute giants. Then there are several stream crossings thrown in to help keep the feet cool and the boots clean. But the saving grace is that this is all pretty well undisturbed forest with several awe-inspiring giant trees, amazing birdlife – many Kaka – and if one is careful and can follow the various coloured markers there is endless tramping to be done.

Tramp briefing



First stream crossing on log



Detail: The start of the trail (**WP01520masl**) is easy as it is a gravel road heading SW out of the carpark but within 200m the road is abandoned (**WP02516masl**) and the adventure starts with a tricky root infested descent down to cross a stream line using a fallen tree as a bridge. If features as such are expected then be prepared to be disappointed as most of the time and energy will be spent following the incipient trail which is marked with orange triangular markers. In fact there are so many different coloured markers it would be possible to get confused and lost – there are orange, pink, white, yellow and some of the silvery old venetian blind type markers. Basically most of the pink markers are on trap lines and they run N-S as this is an area with a lot of DoC input – there are all sorts of traps to be found / seen as well as a few “seed collectors” under some of the large trees. It has to be emphasised that the trail as shown on the attached map and detailed in the GPS records really should be strictly followed – ensure you know the bearing you are on and that compass skills are up to the job.

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1827432	5741366	520	Ranginui Carpark 1 hour drive from Taupo
02	1827288	5741249	516	200m (3min); Start of Track off road, steep down for log crossing of stream line
03	1826540	5740724	550	1.21km (33min); Last orange marker go to white
04	1826448	5740646	545	1.34km (38min); Ohahau Stream
05	1825640	5740251	566	2.31km (1:15min); Second stream
06	1825031	5740210	576	2.96km (1:243in); Creek
07	1824778	5740199	577	3.21km (1:45min); Third stream crossing
08	1824075	5740160	572	3.94km (1:54min); Creek
09	1823930	5740170	573	4.03km (2:05min); First swamp
10	1823848	5740170	576	4.25km (2:14min); Second swamp
11	1823694	5740169	578	4.41km (2:18min); Third swamp
12	1823646	5740174	579	4.46km (2:19min); Fourth and last swamp
13	1823267	5740166	610	4.86km (2:53min); SAR tracks crossing point
14	1822802	5740195	601	5.35km (3:10min); Kaka Road end, do not use road but head S
15	1822695	5739919	604	5.64km (3:17min); Track enters from right
16	1822642	5739798	608	5.71km (3:18min); Orange flagging
17	1822532	5739708	607	5.90km (3:24min); Start on track with yellow markers
18	1822655	5739459	605	6.29km (3:32min); Grassy valley / meadow
19	1822536	5739348	621	6.47km (3:37min); Access to Limestone Rd
20	1822984	5738913	613	7.24km (3:55min); Start of white markers
21	1823387	5738850	591	7.74km (4:07min); Cross-cutting strong animal track
22	1823443	5738757	580	7.87km (4:11min); Track at bend off right out to road for Pureora Lodge
23	1824072	5738897	589	8.67km (4:30min); Turn due S to Pureora Lodge track
24	1824072	5738748	543	8.83km (4:38min); Steep, huge steps down into valley, slippery
25	1824006	5738511	562	9.11km (5:07min); Pureora Lodge BBQ site for lunch stage 2
26	1824701	5738763	554	10.14km (5:23min); Lookout on Loop Track
27	1824782	5738647	556	10.31km (5:27min); Left off Loop Track to Waipapa south track junction
28	1825082	5738717	545	10.64km (5:34min); Sign warning hunters there are children about from Pureora Lodge
29	1825175	5738752	519	10.76km (5:39min); Stream and wet feet almost guaranteed
30	1826119	5738861	527	11.92km (6:16min); Creek to keep feet moist
31	1827663	5740978	527	15.28km (8:09min); Ranginui Road at sign for Waipapa Hunter's Access, go left
32	1827433	5741359	529	15.76km (8:18min); Back at carpark



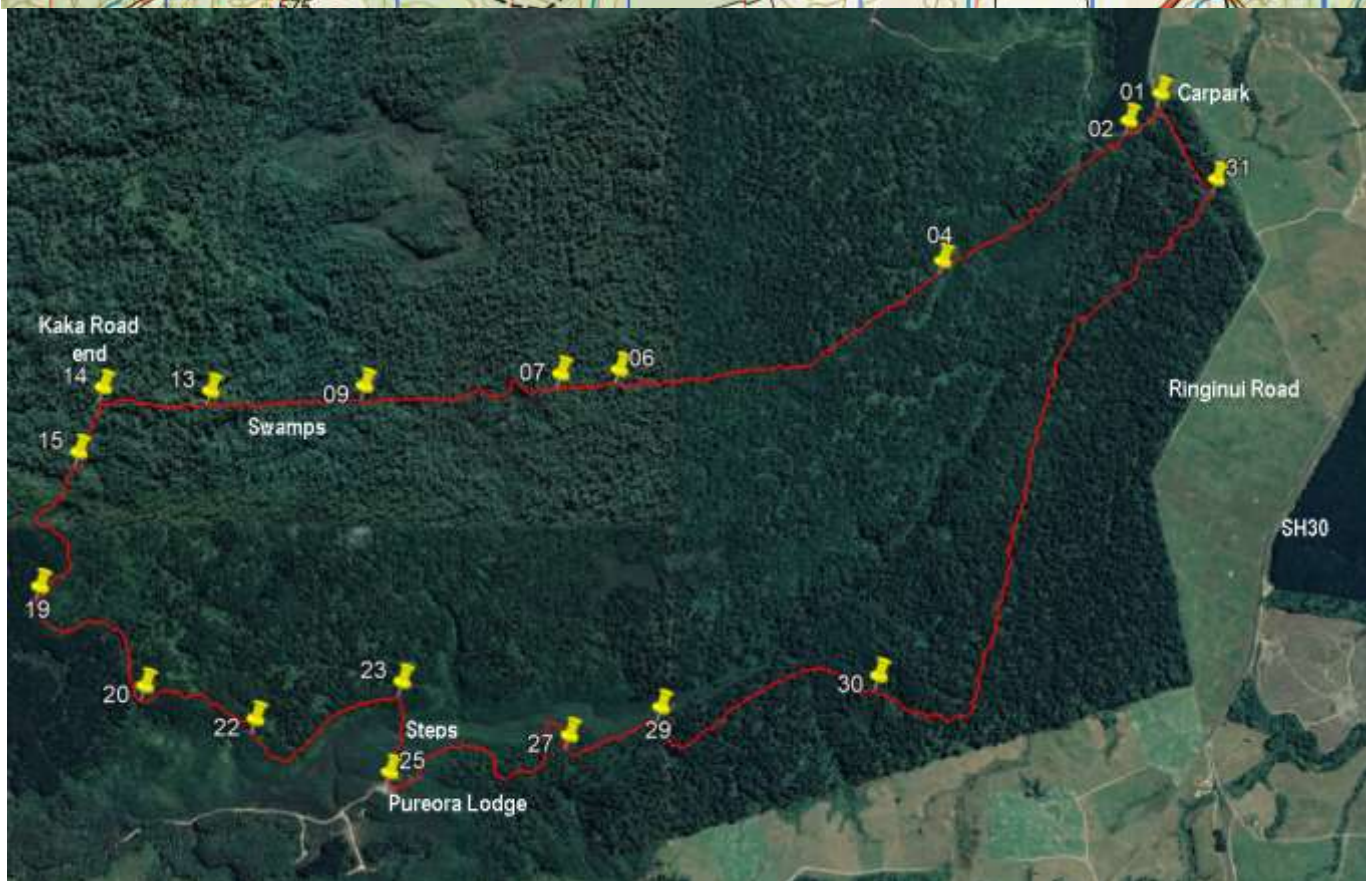
Times/ distances are taken from Taupo Police Station

Track markers galore



Forest giant





Once off the road the route basically heads SW on a magnetic bearing of 214degrees for 1.93km crossing the Ohahau Stream (**WP04545masl**) about halfway. There is then a long section of 2.8km on a bearing of 244 degrees magnetic passing through a few boggy areas and crossing more stream lines to emerge into the open at the end of Kaka Road (**WP14601masl**). Contrary to all hope the road is not used but it is back into the forest for a tricky 0.6km on a bearing of 184magnetic following orange markings to arrive at a point where the track markers become yellow (**WP17607masl**) and coniferous forest borders on the RHS as the route swings to the SE then to the SW at a grassy meadow (**WP18605masl**). Access to Limestone Road is then passed (**WP19621masl**) as direction swings from SW to SE then loops round to SSE and white markers are now followed (**WP20613masl**). Soon after this there is a section of about 500m heading to the SE where a clear animal track crosses (**WP21591masl**) and if an escape route is desired there is a junction with a track going off right (**WP22580masl**) which leads to the road that goes to Pureora Lodge

Superb forest



Time for reflection



A couple of hundred metres after this junction the route swings back to the NE as it follows the edge of the drop to the Karamarama Stream and allows the odd glimpse of Pureora Lodge down in the valley below. There is then a sharp turn to the right (**WP23589masl**) as the track heads due south towards the lodge and a very steep flight of huge, slippery steps (**WP24543masl**) is descended to cross the stream which, for a change, is bridged. Then it is a bit of a scramble up to pop out into the open at the BBQ site at Pureora Lodge (**WP25562masl**). This makes an excellent stop for lunch, or possibly a second lunch, before tackling the way back to the start.

Warning for hunters



Sign at the exit point



There is one kilometre of easy walking after the lodge as the Loop Track, tourist standard, is followed passing a look-out (**WP26554masl**) on the way. However the really hard work of the day is just starting since the remaining 6 or 7 kilometres are badly infested with windfalls and some of these are really large trees requiring big efforts to get over them. If you have doubts in the mind then back-track to Pureora Lodge and walk out to the road from there after arranging that your transport will come round and pick you up – the access road into the lodge is gated!

The first 400metres is a straight line bearing on 50 degrees magnetic with an interesting old sign (**WP28545masl**) lying on the ground warning hunters that there could be children in the area (out of Pureora Lodge). From this sign it is steeply down to ensure wet feet if they have stayed dry until this time as the river crossing (**WP29519masl**) is deep enough to get over the top of the boots. The route then swings NE to SE with another opportunity for feet washing (**WP30527masl**). Finally the route swings on to a NNE bearing for 1.5km and the pretty hard work continues due to the windfalls, especially now as around 7 hours tramping will have been done. Finally when very close to the stream line on the left the direction changes slightly to follow a NE bearing and finally hits Ranginui Road (**WP31527masl**) at a sign showing that this is the access point for hunters 500metres from the starting carpark. It has to be said that there really are very few features of note on the latter sections apart from DoC seed collectors under some of the trees but there are ample markers to ensure an easy exit from the forest – track markers, ribbons etc.

Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS: (Garmin GPSMap 62sc • WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit • masl = metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS units) 	
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