



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

August 2021



Tongariro National Park vegetation photo by JJudith Bogle

WAIKATO HUT

Your lodge on Mt Ruapehu
Tongariro National Park



www.wtc.org.nz



A steep climb on the Pehitawa track photo by Nicola Guy

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WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB

P. O. Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

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Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand
Inc

Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 830

August 2021

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President: Judith Bogle 027 3810283
Secretary: Dorothy Cawdron 027 7424222
Treasurer: Guy Domett treasurer@wtc.org.nz 027 2483008
Immediate past president: Selwyn June
Members: John McArthur (VP Tramp) Stephen Prendergast (VP Ski)
Stephen Phillips Allan Wickens Lois Rowell
Mike Nightingale 8562394

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**Tramping Subcommittee**

**Tramping email:** waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com

**Chairperson:** John McArthur mcarthur@outlook.co.nz 021 2889641  
**Secretary:** Dorothy Cawdron **Treasurer:** Guy Domett  
**Club Captain:** Allan Wickens 027 9509546  
**Membership:** Lois Rowell 027 2881148  
**Web & Facebook:** Rizal Razak 021 2676566  
**Transport:** Ashley Hoskin 027 4909545  
**Social convenor:** Jacqui Dick 021 1375201  
**Sub-committee:** Selwyn June 027 4978151

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Ski Subcommittee

Ski email: waikatoski@gmail.com **Waikato Hut phone:** 07 8923821
Chairperson: Stephen Prendergast 021 466247
Bookings: Stephen Prendergast 021 466247
Finance officer: Michael Barker 021 2463500
Members: Steve Phillips 021 1031436
Mary Reed 021 1185107

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**Bulletin:** Lesley Kuggeleijn 027 4942414  
**Editor & Club Librarian:** Dianne June djune@xtra.co.nz 07 8433066

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Waikato Tramping Club account: 03 1555 0091625 02 (include the trip no.)

Club night, Wednesday, 1st September

Club nights take place at St. Stephen's church on the corner of Mahoe St and Ohaupo Rd. The meeting starts at 7.30pm

Have you ever wondered how our lodge (or 'hut' as it is also referred to) on Mt Ruapehu came to be? Did you know that during the 1960's it used to be a very small single story hut with an outside long drop that had to be dug out regularly during the depths of winter? That the site of our hut was very carefully chosen to have the best views? John Wilson will briefly cover the interesting development of Waikato Hut over the years. He will then show something of his use of the hut, and will talk about some of the neat places to visit around the park using the hut as a base.

Movie night at the Haines': On Sept 10th come along for another potluck dinner session at Andrea & Graham Haines' place, 11 Alison St, Hamilton. Ph 8395932 starting at 6.30pm. Bring your meat, a dish to share, liquid refreshments, and \$20. Supper will be provided. A great film has been chosen which should amuse all.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2021

2957	21/22 Aug	M/F	Winter Tramp	Callum McDougall
2958	29 Aug	E/M	Wharekirauponga	Dianne June
	3 Sept		CLUB NIGHT	Jacqui Dick
2959	4/5 Sept	M	via Te Iringa to Oamaru hut	Steve Dick
	10 Sept		Movie night	Graham Haines
2960	12 Sept	E	Waikato river walks IV	Ron Dick
2961	19 Sept	M	Tongariro Forest	John Wilson
2962	25/26 Sept	E/M	WTC 500	Jacqui Dick & Mike Peck
2963	3 Oct	M	Hihikiwi	Merlyn Warren
	6 Oct		CLUB NIGHT	Jacqui Dick
2964	9/10 Oct	M	Kaiwhakauka track	Les Warren
2965	17 Oct	F	Okataina western track	Mike Peck
2966	23-25 Oct		Great Barrier Island	Peter Ayson & Steve Dick
2967	31 Oct	M	Volunteer mines	Rizal Razak
	3 Nov		Photo competition	Jacqui Dick
2968	6/7 Nov		Kawekas again!	Jacqui Dick

Don't let a lack of equipment deter you from coming on a trip. Talk to the trip leader - who may be able to assist with lending or sharing gear.

TIME and FITNESS GUIDELINES

E = Easy. Up to 4 hours per day, pace slower than E/M.

E/M = Easy/Medium. Up to 5-6 hours/day, pace slower than M.

M = Medium. Up to 6-7 hours/day, at standard walking pace.

M/F = Medium/Fit. Up to 7-8 hours/day, pace faster than M.

F = Fit. Over 8 hours/day, pace faster than M/F.

Note that factors such as party size, fitness, weather, terrain and leadership will influence actual times, so the above are estimates only.

Bookings and Cancellations: no later than the WEDNESDAY before the trip. Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip.

REMEMBER: You can book online from our website too.

Departure Point: Trips depart from the river end of London Street. Cars can be parked, facing the road, in the car park on the right at the end of the cul de sac. If in doubt contact your trip leader.

Weekend Trips: leave on Friday nights at 7pm sharp unless otherwise stated.

Day Trips: leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

If someone is concerned because a trip is late back, contact:

1) Club Captain; 2) President; 3) committee member.

Minimum equipment required:

Day Trips: A thermal layer (polypropylene, polyester etc or wool), an insulating layer of fleece (polartec etc) or wool and a water/wind-proof parka outer shell. Shorts or longjohns/over-trousers in cool or wet weather. Torch and sunscreen. Boots or strong shoes. Lunch, snacks and water bottle. First aid kit.

Weekend Trips: The above plus pack with plastic liner bag, sleeping bag, tent, sleeping mat, cooker, billy, plate or bowl, spoon, food, spare dry clothes for evening, towel, toilet gear, light camp shoes. A water purifier can be useful. Plus, in extreme weather or country: additional warm top, over-trousers or woollen/fleece trousers, warm outdoor mittens or gloves, over-mitts, warm hat or balaclava, sunglasses. Ice axe and crampons for snow.

Trip Descriptions

Trip 2957

Winter tramp

21/22 Aug

This trip will follow a track that offers some of the best tops travel near Hamilton and hopefully spectacular views of the Kaimanawa ranges, Ruapehu & the Waipakihi valley. We'll spend Friday night at the Urchin Campsite. On Saturday we'll climb Urchin and continue along the ridge to join the Umukarikari track which takes us to Waipakihi Hut. We return via the same Umukarikari track but will follow it to the Waihaha Valley campsite for a bit of variety.

Leader: Callum McDougall

Ph: 020 41135196

Grade: M/F

Email: callummcdougal@gmail.com

Transport: Senior member \$45-75

Senior non-member: \$65-85

Trip 2958**Wharekirauponga****29 Aug**

This track is approximately 20 km long. Named after the Te Wharekirauponga Stream on the eastern side of the Kaimai range and shortened to the Te Whareki Pack Track. Broadly speaking we go from the Karangahake gorge area to Whangamata. Today the entrance to the Te Whareki Pack Track at the Golden Cross end is by walking from the carpark up and along the south side of the mine lake to its end and then dropping down to the right through two gateways, turning left on the old pack track, climbing slowly up through the pine trees into heavy bush and a sharp left turn onto the original track. Views of Mt. Pirongia can be seen as one starts to leave the pine trees behind. Approximately 2.5 hours from the Golden Cross carpark (Lookout to Whangamata) there are, on the left of the track on a ridge, some good views of Whangamata and down towards the Quarry Road carpark.

Leader: Dianne June**Ph:** 8433066**Grade:** E/M**Transport:** Senior member \$20 to 35

Senior non-member: \$30-45.

Trip 2959**Te Iringa to Oamaru Hut****4/5 Sept**

On Friday night we'll travel to Clements Mill road (off SH5) and camp not far from the track to the site of the former Te Iringa Hut. We'll be in the top end of the Kaimanawa ranges. Next morning we'll walk along this track, cross the Kaipō river, and continue down the river to Oamaru Hut. There are 12 bunks and plenty of room for tents there. Sunday we'll walk along a well-formed route out to Poronui station. This walk is along a hard surface so if you wish to bring some footwear that is softer on your feet than tramping boots it would be a good idea. The Sunday walking takes about 3 hours.

Leader: Steve Dick**Ph:** 0274 880 793**Grade:** M/F**Transport:** Senior member \$45-75

Senior non-member: \$65-85

Trip 2960**Waikato River walks IV****12 Sept**

The Waikato River Trail is made up of 100km of off-road trails that follow the banks of the Waikato River from Lake Karapiro in the north to Atiamuri in the south, taking in five lakes, five hydro dams and a number of small towns and villages, showcasing some of the best of the Waikato heartland. The section we will be walking is from Waipapa Dam to the Mangarewa suspension bridge. This is a return trip as the section from the suspension bridge to Jones Landing has been permanently closed. The distance each way is 10km, through bush, past picturesque streams, and with quite a bit on well-formed track. If you would like to see the suspension bridge which is 80 metres long and 42 metres above the water, then walking this section of the trail is the only way to do so. Bring a thermos as we will start with some of Jacqui's lovely home baking by the shores of Lake Waipapa.

Leader: Ron Dick**Ph:** 021 2608149**Grade:** E**Email:** ronjmd@icloud.com**Transport:** Senior member \$20 to 35

Senior non-member: \$30-45.

Trip 2961 **Tongariro Forest** **18-19 Sept**

This tramp follows Te Araroa Trail through Tongariro Forest Conservation Area, starting from the Whakapapa River below Owhango and ending by Hillary Outdoor Education Centre on Access Road 3. The 42 Traverse Track is followed for much of the way, then we take another track to lead us to a crossing of the Mangatepopo Stream. This is a likely spot to see whio. The track climbs out of the Mangatepopo and takes us to Access Road 3. Total distance is about 30km. The forest throughout the area was logged for rimu, totara, matai, miro and kahikatea, but several decades of regeneration have healed much of the previous devastation and it is now pleasant to walk through.

We depart Friday night at 7pm and will camp Friday and Saturday nights.

Leader: John Wilson **Ph:** 021 168 2082 **Grade:** M

Transport: Senior member \$45-75 Senior non-member: \$65-85

Trip 2962 **The WTC 500** **25/26 Sept**

No doubt you have all heard of the Indy 500 but have you heard about the inaugural WTC 500.....?

This is an event not to be missed and is an opportunity for the 500 players in our club to pit their skills against each other to find out who is the best (and who cheats/table talks the most!). The plan is to head down to Raurimu Saturday morning. We will do a walk to the Tupapakuraa falls and then check in to the Slalom Lodge for the night. This has a range of budget style accommodation, a bar, great restaurant and a lovely roaring fire. www.slalomlodge.co.nz. Late afternoon we will begin our inaugural 500 tournament.. Rules are yet to be confirmed (feel free to give me any suggestions). If you haven't learnt how to play don't let that stop you as we can give you a crash course and you can learn as you go. Sunday will be a short walk along the Ohinetonga track before we head home early afternoon. This will be a fun and social weekend so get your name down early so you don't miss out! BYO food apart from dinner as we will eat in the restaurant Saturday night.

Grade: E/M

Leader: Jacqui Dick **Ph:** 021 1375 201 **Email:** jacquimd@me.com

Mike Peck **Ph:** 021 369 256 **Email:** mikeypeck@yahoo.com

Transport: Senior member \$45-75 Senior non-member: \$65-85

Trip 2963 **Hihikiwi new & old** **3 Oct**

A car shuffle will start the day before we get onto the old Hihikiwi track, and tramp to meet the existing track then continue to Pahuatea Hut on top of Mt. Pirongia for lunch- approx 3.5hrs. There will be good views to the coast from a couple of lookouts and on the boardwalk for the last 800 metres to the hut. Travel back the same way, but continue on the "new" track to the road, approx 3 hrs. Lovely bush, the quickest route to the hut, and not much traffic on this track.

Leader: Merlyn Warren **Ph:** 0275249926 **Grade:** M

Email: mylwarren@gmail.com

Transport: Senior member \$45-75 Senior non-member: \$65-85

Trip 2964 **Kaiwhakauka track** **9/10 Oct**

It is approx. 4hrs drive from Hamilton to Whakahoro, on the banks of the Whanganui River. There is a very good and spacious campsite and a 10-bed hut (old classroom). The initial plan is to travel to Whakahoro on Friday late-afternoon and take two days to walk the track. Unfortunately, the track is one-way, so will need to be picked up from the Ruatiti Road end, which is NW inland from Raetihi. I have yet to fully check out the track to firm up on details. I have checked the track between Whakahoro and Mosley's Shelter but, plan on checking the track between Ruatiti and Mosley's Shelter. The section between Whakahoro and Mosley's Shelter, unfortunately includes a boring metal road section for the first hour. The bush section is well-graded.

Leader: Les Warren **Ph:** 0278644937 **Grade:** M

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com

Transport: Senior member \$45-75 Senior non-member: \$65-85

Trip 2965 **Okataina western track** **17 Oct**

A one day tramp of the Okataina Western track near Rotorua. Total length is 22.5km and has an estimated walking time of 7 hours.

We will depart Hamilton at 7.30am and drive to Te Ruato bay at Lake Rotoiti and tramp south to Millar Rd near Lake Okareka. We will need a driver for the drop off/pick up. Driver could walk in for an hour and likewise at the other end. A stop in Rotorua afterwards for dinner. Daylight saving will give us plenty of time to complete this trip.

Leader: Mike Peck **Ph:** 021 369 256 **Grade:** F

Email: mikeypeck@yahoo.com

Transport: Senior member \$20 to 35 Senior non-member: \$30-45.

Trip 2967 **Volunteer mine** **31 Oct**

Another old gold mining area in the Coromandel hills to the north of Paeroa.

Volunteer Mines rights over an area of fifty acres was taken back in 1910 and was the only mine in the Marototo Valley area which returned a profit to its owners. With fine views of Marototo Rock, Waipahake and Wires Track areas, the tramp is graded as Medium with a total trip time of approximately 6 hours.

Leader: Rizal Razak **Ph:** 021 267 6566 **Grade:** M

Email: rizraz@gmail.com

Transport: Senior member \$20 to 35 Senior non-member: \$30-45.

Editorial

As I write the snow is coming and I expect we'll see snow on Pirongia tonight. But those warm days we've had recently are truly harbingers of spring. There are some super trips coming up in the next 6 months or so and I'm sure some of you have your eyes on south island maps. Which means it's time for a trip or more to

Waikato hut for snow therapy - good exercise tramping in the snow - and getting your fitness programme underway to cope with that summer trip schedule. I'm looking forward to leading my first trip in along while at the end of August so hope I don't disappoint myself or you. And speaking of leading, how about putting your name forward to the club captain to lead a trip? Either offer a trip you think you could manage or ask to be buddied with an experienced leader on a trip already on the programme. Your tramping mates are a pretty tolerant bunch who are always keen to help you increase your skills in the field. Now to get on my exercycle to improve the cardiovascular capability.... Dianne

Presidential Blog

With the feedback from last club night, there is a positive feel in the air, helped by the hot toddy; that even in the cold and wet winter time we can find a positive note. This cold front coming through should hopefully be followed with lots of snow for the skiers, to really get the ski season going. But even if stuck in the lodge or hut somewhere we can make the best of it, in my case hot chocolate around the fire place. This is a great time to catch up with people and see what support or adventures you can collaborate with.

The trip planning for the summer time has taken place and there are a few adventures to be had. You may find one that you decide to go on. Talk to the trip leader to see not only what you may need or if your fitness is up to scratch but what support you could give. Sharing responsibility and having input will add to the creativity and possible flexibility of your options on your trip. Collaborating with your trip leader will make it more enjoyable for them and provide an opportunity to learn more and enrich the experience for you. Judith Bogle

from the Ski Club...

Welcome to our latest newer members, who have already embraced ski lodge life. A couple of good storms are bringing overdue snow to the Ski field. Everyone is relieved about this as a temperate July followed a warm June. Even if August continues it's springlike behaviour it will be with a more established snow base. This will bring on the opening of the upper mountain facilities, followed shortly after by the west side lifts.

After 2 very well patronised Snow craft weekends what do you do next ? Popular options in winter range from Northern circuit, a winter variation of Tongariro crossing - with an overnight component, or one of the surrounding options in the wider Tongariro National Park.

The Lodge is operating in Ski configuration for the next few months. To enjoy better access to the Lodge over this time of year you should become a combined member, which covers your tramping and ski membership. You'll have access to the member price of \$35 / night for your stay vs \$60 / night non-members, and

preferential booking access as well. You don't need to be a skier or snowboarder to get this deal. There's good availability mid week across August. With smaller crowds and less pressure on parking it is a very good option if you have some flex in your schedule, or some of those magical free days.

See you at the lodge soon

Stephen Prendergast, Ski Team Leader

Winter Rates are in effect from now on.

For Ski Club members including combined members, rates are \$35 night for Senior members, and \$20 for child members.

As a tramping club member, you are still able to book and stay during winter. This costs \$60 per night for an adult and \$35 night for children.

Non- member bookings will be processed and confirmed each week once spaces have been released to Ski Club members.

Mid-week Walks & Tramps

We are continuing with the current format, having a walk or tramp on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of the month. The activities have proven to be as varied as the group is and the communication via the Mid-week W & T s Group page on WhatsApp is working well.

If you would like to be part of this communication, please download WhatsApp on your phone & text your request to Sharon 021 458 525.

Trip Reports

Trip 2949

Off the beaten track

27 June

Ed comment: my apologies for the glitch in the printing of this report last month. Here is the correct and complete version.

This was a loop track where Steve Dick had kindly done some bush slashing to make it easier for us to walk. This is his hunting ground therefore we had the privileged to see where he goes. At the base of the Wairere track we took a sharp left and headed up the hill. This was a rough track with roots and some loose dirt, making it difficult to get footing sometimes. We were mainly in bush all the way up the hill.

Unfortunately, there was no view once we got to the tops due to the mist. There was light rain on and off and we were so lucky to only have a downpour right at the end when we got to the cars. At the top as we walked along the ridge before the hut is a helicopter pad and then Puketutu hut which is well looked after. Had a stop there, food and a bit of a dry out. At the base of the Wairere track we took a sharp left and headed up the hill. This was a rough track with roots and some loose dirt, making it difficult to get footing sometimes. We were mainly in bush all the way up the hill. Unfortunately, there was no view once we got to the tops due to the mist. There was light rain on and off and we were so lucky to only have a down pour right at the end when we got to the cars. At the top as we walked along the ridge before the hut is a helicopter pad and then Puketutu hut which is well looked after. Had a stop there, food and a bit of a dry out.

This part took about 4.5hrs Then past the hut we headed to the main North South track which was a bit more than a kilometre. Got to the top of Wairere and headed back down to the carpark. We needed to get headlamps out for the last half of the Wairere track. Team included, Amanda C, Les W, Anita S, Aron K. Steve D, Theresa O'L and Judith B.

Trip 2951 Waitomo to Te Kuiti - Pehitawa track 11 July

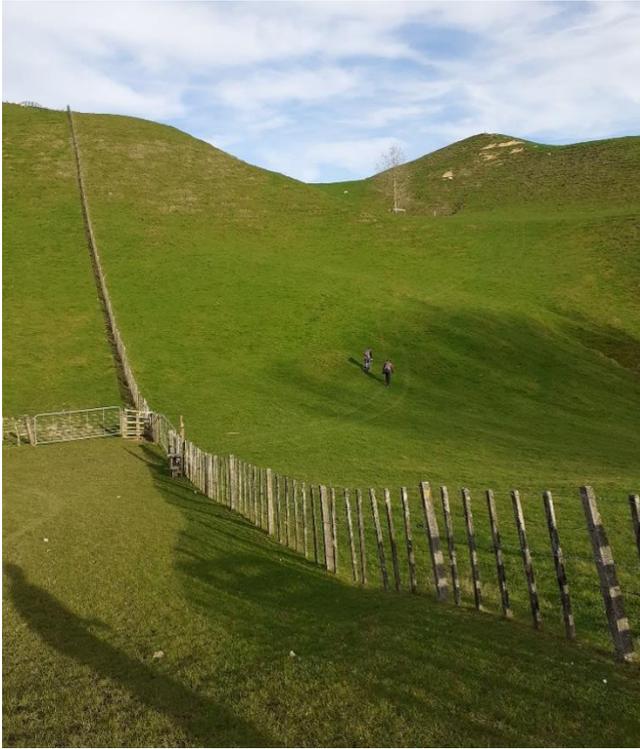
A small group of 9 set out Sunday morning heading for the Waitomo Village, we picked up Barb at Kihikihi and after a toilet stop got to Fullerton Road. The weather was quite brisk with some wearing warm beanies & gloves & we started off around 9.30am, the track we took is part of the Te Araroa trail so we followed the orange markers across muddy private farmland to the first of 3 steep, bush-covered hills.



The first goal of the day

photo by Nicola Guy

We had a short break in the bush with us looking out to the first of many great views overlooking the Waitomo area. We made good progress having to get up & over many stiles along the way, we struck a lot of gorse on one of the bush sections then coming out onto more farmland we had an amazing view over Te Kuiti and in the far distance Selwyn pointed out Mt Pureora & also Mt Ruapehu in all its white glory ! We then headed through pine trees down to a farm track where we had lunch sitting by a haybarn, we met Dianne coming the other way on the swing bridge over the Mangapu River. We entered the Pehitawa kahikatea forest, a protect remnant and the best you will see on the Te Araroa Trail.



We then headed up & down some steep farmland, going over many more stiles (with poor Marianne getting stuck in deep mud/cow poo trying to get over one) and then dealing with either, bull steers, sheep, horses and even turkeys along the way while also having the most amazing views of the countryside & also looking back to see how far we had walked.

Sunday tramps including steep hills, no problem

Photo by Marianne Libeau

The day might have had a cold wind that there was no rain. Barb had her fitbit on & said we had tramped 17kms. We stopped at the Big Apple for hot drinks or in Karen's case a very tasty white wine. We arrived back into Hamilton at 6.00pm after a really good day out. Thanks to Leader Selwyn and driver Dianne, walking crew were David C, Marianne L, Karen R, Barb C, Vanya W, Debbie M, Nicola G, & scribe Nette L.

From the committee table:

New members: Romandow Phothirath, Jim Scott, Nicola Guy, Tehnuka Ilanko, Rhys Jones & Adele Williamson, Aidan Rowlingson.

Resignations: None.

Membership: We have 203 tramping members this month.

For Sale: MacPac microlight tent, one-person. Good condition. \$90 ono. Ph or text 07 855 8335; 027 3510415 or email: fiona.greendaisy@gmail.com.



Photo competition

Our Annual competition closes this year on October 6th. Entries must be supplied by the closing date in digital form. Our categories are in alignment with those of FMC

1. Above bushline with no human element
2. Or with a human element
3. Below bushline with no human element
4. Or with a human element
5. Historic
6. Native flora and fauna
7. Long exposure - This category is intended for those taken in extremely low light situations such as caves or canyons, at night-time. A great opportunity for the technically minded photographer.

We also have the 2 WTC categories of:

8. Club Character – features a humorous subject which has a club context.
9. International. Caters for photos which are otherwise ineligible for the FMC photo competition.

FMC has an annual theme to the competition, which encourages photography that documents topical places which we are fighting for, current campaigns we're battling and values under immediate threat. The theme in no way restricts entries, it merely offers a little reward for entries consistent with the theme! Last years' theme was based on the mighty river-carved stewardship lands of the South Island's West Coast. This year any image taken within the boundaries of the proposed park is eligible.

Rules:

A. Definition of a "human element"

The definition of a "human element" is flexible but the general intention is: Where the photo contains anything other than as a very minor feature: people, a hut, a track sign/marker, bridge, ice axe and anything else that has been introduced by humans into the environment then we would define that as having "a Human element". But if a photo has what could be called a Human Element but that element is very small, inconsequential and not a feature in the photo then you could count it as "No Human Element".

B. Entries for the FMC aligned categories must be taken after 1 Jan 2016.

Any photos taken prior to this date will automatically be entered into the historic category.

C. Definition of "historic"

The intention for the historic category is for entrants to go back through club and

individual archives to select “old photos” rather than “photos of old things”. As an example, a recent photo of a hut built in the 1950’s is not a ‘historic’ photo. However, a photo of the same hut taken in the 1960’s certainly is a ‘historic’ photo. Photos for the historic category must be taken before 1 Jan 2016.

D. All photos apart from the International Category must be taken within New Zealand, which is defined as within our Exclusive Economic Zone. This includes the following islands; North, South, Stewart, Chatham, Kermadec, Sub-Antarctic.

Our photos will be judged by an independent photographer and results presented at the November Club Night.

Entries to be emailed or given on a USB stick to

Jacqui Dick, **email:** jacquimd@me.com, **ph:** 021 1375201

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*Snippets from here' n there*

➤ Lost on the Bell track 7/8/21 Pirongia: about an hour up track from the midway campsite on the Bell Track and on steep stuff with big steps (for little legs), Amanda dropped her green possum/merino wool beanie hat with 3 beautifully folded neck buffs inside. (1 grey, 2 pink/purple). If you should happen to want to go for a walk up this track to retrieve the beanie and buffs for her she would very much appreciate getting them back. If you are the finder, please contact her at [amanda.78.collins@gmail.com](mailto:amanda.78.collins@gmail.com).

➤ EXPRESSION of INTEREST: Dusky Track Trip. I am interested in looking at tackling the Dusky Track in the Summer of 2021 / 2022 and, at this stage, checking whether there are others interested. Yes; this trip is a long way out but, for me and probably others, I need time to get fitter and fine-tune my equipment and food. Food will be a big issue and, I am experimenting in dehydrating my food so as to reduce my weight and space. When to Go? At this point, I am looking at a time frame around Christmas 2021 and New Year 2022. With this track, there are limited access times to start from Lake Hauroko (the preferred start point), with Thursday and Monday being the scheduled ferry days across the Lake. With this in mind, I suggest a track start date of Thu 30 Dec 21 and a track finish of Sat 08 January (allowing 10 days on the track). This will mean flying down about the Tue 28 Dec 21 and return flight Sun 09 Jan 22 / Mon 10 Jan 22. If this date is not ideal, I am most happy to discuss a common time when to go. By going around this time, it will leave the opportunity for those interested in doing a Club South Island trip later in Feb / March. Late Feb / early March period will be out for me. At this early stage of planning, I will look at flying to Queenstown then a shuttle to Te Anau; stay one/two nights in Te Anau – I would prefer to have a day fine-tuning gear etc, as the shuttle to Lake Hauroko leaves Te Anau at 0730, then arrive late in Te Anau and on the road early the next day, which will be a long day travelling and walking to our first hut. Coming back – as it would be late-afternoon when we return to Te

Anau, I would look at staying the night in Te Anau before catching a shuttle back to Queenstown and connect with a flight home. For those interested in tackling the Dusky Track, please contact me and let me know whether the dates above are suitable or suggest some dates that would suit you. I am happy to settle on a date that suits all of those interested. Irrespective of when we go, the weather will be a major factor in determining our final dates. Over the next several months I will put together a trip itinerary and send to those who express an interest in this trip. I feel the main thing for now is to see what a suitable date would be for this trip, which will then determine the preparation and planning for the trip. Les Warren, contact: [warrenlb2017@outlook.com](mailto:warrenlb2017@outlook.com)

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from the DoC website....

➤ **New campsite pass.** The pass gives people access to about 94% of all DoC campsites around New Zealand (195 of 208 paid campsites), including bookable and non-bookable campsites, although there are some restrictions on when and how long the pass can be used. People can choose between passes for a week, month or year. DoC now offers two passes – one for huts (the Backcountry Hut Pass) and

Camping pass: Under fives is free.

Age group	1 week	1 month	Annual
Adult (18+)	\$55	\$80	\$140
Child (5-17)	\$27.50	\$40	\$70

Backcountry hut pass: Under 11yrs is free

Age group	6 months	Annual
Adult (18+)	\$108	\$144
Youth (11-17)	\$54	\$72

➤ The Heaphy Track has reopened. Work has been done to clear fallen trees and repair storm damage on the Heaphy Track. Extra care is advised on the coastal section. The Queen Charlotte Track remains temporarily closed following the severe weather over the weekend of 17-18 July. The track has widespread damage with multiple slips, fallen trees, cracks and dropouts along the track, which are impassable in some places. DoC is continuing to assess the damage to the track and plan for repairs. Initial repair work has begun but it's expected to take several months to reopen some sections of the track.

➤ Whangamarino wetland restoration project. Whangamarino is the second largest freshwater wetland in the North Island and was chosen as one of three nationally significant wetland sites in DOC's Arawai Kākāriki wetlands restoration programme. Whangamarino has been designated an international RAMSAR site in recognition of its status as an area of outstanding biodiversity. Seven thousand native plants grown at Waikeria Prison have been donated to DOC and planted in internationally significant Whangamarino wetland in the

Waikato The plants, grown from eco-sourced at Waikeria Prison's Horticulture Training Nursery near Te Awamutu, are a product of the intensive training programme to prepare learners for employment in production horticulture. Over the last two years, Waikeria has increased plant production from 50,000 per year to around 90,000, with a view to delivering 25,000 plants to DoC over the next three years.

➤ **Storm damage** on Taranaki Maunga closes tracks. Tracks on Taranaki Maunga known to be affected include the upper Ihaia Track to Waiaua Gorge Hut, which has been closed due to a large washout, making the hut inaccessible from the western side of the mountain. The Around the Mountain Circuit (AMC) is closed until this track can be rerouted. Other damage includes a slip below the Plateau to Dawson Falls section of the AMC, where the track is still accessible, but caution is required. Tree windfalls on the Waingongoro Track, and at Ratapihipihi and Everett Park Scenic Reserves, will hopefully be cleared this week. The team is still making its way through the network of tracks both on and off the Maunga. Trampers heading out need to take extreme care, be aware they may encounter damage and be prepared to turn back. "Anyone coming across track damage on public conservation land, we'd appreciate photos and GPS coordinates sent through to us at egmontvc@doc.govt.nz," says Andy Johnston. Track assessments and repair could take some time. Trampers are urged to check the DoC website or contact North Egmont Visitor Centre prior to heading outdoors.

➤ **Dactylanthus sets seed** for a bumper season. One of Aotearoa's most unusual native plants has a more promising future in the Waikato following a successful flowering season. Members of the Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society have worked alongside DoC staff on the recovery of *Dactylanthus taylorii*/puna o te rēinga on Mt Pirongia since 2015. The odds are stacked against this endemic plant due to the impact of introduced pests, particularly possums who eat the flowers, making intervention necessary for its continued survival in the Waikato.

DoC Waikato Biodiversity Ranger, Cara Hansen, has been working with the Pirongia Restoration Society on *dactylanthus* recovery and has hand pollinated the flowers seeding this season. At around this time of year monitoring of seed production starts as well as thinking about where these seeds will be sown if collected. Plants on Mt. Pirongia flower between mid-December-early February and this season 30 of the monitored plants had female flowers which were hand pollinated over the summer. Hand pollination is an even more important task for volunteers this year due to the absence of rats following recent pest control efforts."

Plants are hand-pollinated to overcome two major challenges: they have a dioecious flowering biology which means there are separate female and male flowers. For successful pollination to occur, female flowers must be pollinated by

male flowers. There is also an absence of its natural pollinator, pekapeka or short-tailed bats, due to local extinction. Pekapeka are attracted to the strong musky scent of the flower and are rewarded with an abundance of nectar in exchange for transferring pollen from one plant to another.

Rats have been identified as a potential pollinator of the plants but the success of recent predator control on the maunga - part of DOC's Tiakina Ngā Manu programme - has reduced rat numbers. The hand pollination has been effective, and we are optimistic that by springtime we'll have a good harvest of seeds," says Cara Hansen. The seeds take 4-7 years to germinate so it's a relatively long wait to see any results. The waiting, however, pays off and what happens next in the plant's lifecycle is fascinating. Once a seed germinates it attaches to a host tree root - typically pate or seven-finger, five-finger, lemonwood and putaputaweta - and covers it like a bottle cap. The tree root responds by developing the flared woody rose shape, giving it one of its common names. Plants will show above ground if they are large or flowering. *Dactylanthus* is the only fully parasitic flowering plant in New Zealand. It derives all its nutrients from its host so has no Green leaves or roots of its' own.



Above & below: flowers

Above: fruiting body. Below: wood roses



- Misinformation from the DoC booking system:
1. The Great Walks are all booked out. No they aren't – not even close! Across the network of 10 Great Walks, there's about 45% of hut space available and 95% of campsites available. The Milford Track is the only Great Walk that has sold out so far and even that will have cancellations across the year.
 2. You can't camp on a Great Walk. Milford and Paparoa tracks are the only Great Walks where campsites aren't provided. You can book camp sites on all the other walks. We know carrying a tent, sleeping bag and mat, and all the cooking equipment you'll need, *really* isn't for everyone. But for those who are keen and able, this is a cheaper option. Camping offers heaps of capacity for groups and night-time quiet and privacy for those who want it. Great Walk campsites range in price from \$5 to \$32 a night, with New Zealand adults paying no more than \$21 a night even in peak season.
 3. Half the places are taken before bookings open. No they really aren't! No one gets early access to the booking system. Even the Director-General has to book the same as the rest of us. Agents (such as i-SITES who make bookings for customers over the counter or on the phone) and concessionaires (the majority of which are walking or kayaking guides) book Great Walks in the same way the public does (i.e. online when bookings open on a first come, first served basis, including the details of each client).*(Ed comment: a recent newspaper item noted that some businesses are making group bookings ahead of knowing how many people will be in their group and DoC is looking to prevent this).*
 4. DoC should just put more huts in! While we have already established that there's heaps of capacity across the 10 Great Walks, we get asked all the time why we don't just expand huts and bunk spaces – on the Paparoa and Milford tracks in particular. The Great Walks have a limited number of bed spaces (camping space and bunks in huts), to keep numbers at an appropriate level – this ensures the natural and cultural heritage surrounding these walks is protected and that people have a high-quality experience on them.

➤ **Wilderness area mapping tool.** For the first time ever, you can clearly view the boundaries of all the gazetted (official) and proposed wilderness areas on an interactive topographical map. Layers showing all national parks and other public conservation land are available, as are links to more information about each of the wilderness areas. Have a look at <https://www.wildernessmag.co.nz/five-online-maps-to-transform-your-next-hike/>

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View from the Pehitawa track photo by Nicola Guy



Huge *Auricularia auricula-judae*, (jews' ear) found on Mt. Pirongia recently  
photo by Selwyn June

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