



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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

April 2023



Bondarzewia kirkii fungus under beech trees photo by Selwyn June

WAIKATO HUT

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Tongariro National Park



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Neauruhoe by Dianne June

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

Free to members

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 848

April 2023

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President: Judith Bogle 027 3810283
Secretary: Dorothy Cawdron 027 7424222
Treasurer: Guy Domett 027 2483008
Members: John McArthur (VP Tramp) Stephen Prendergast (VP Ski)
Stephen Phillips Allan Wickens Lois Rowell Mike Barker
Selwyn June 0274 978151

Tramping Subcommittee

Tramping email: waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com

Chairperson: John McArthur mcArthur@outlook.co.nz 021 2889641
Club Captain: Les Warren 027 8644937
Membership: Lois Rowell loiserowell@gmail.com 027 2881148
Member: Selwyn June 027 4978151
Rupert Craggs 027 6811926
Web & Facebook: Rizal Razak 021 2676566
Transport: Allan Wickens 027 9509546
Social convenor: Jacqui Dick 021 1375201

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
Ashley Hoskin 027 4909545

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

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

Club night, Wednesday 3rd May

This is **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** night

This is your chance to be involved with the running of our club. You can nominate or be nominated for positions on the various committees. Over the past couple of months there have been a couple of points noted in the bulletin and you will shortly be receiving a copy of the Annual report/accounts. Come along to learn how you can help keep our successful club running.

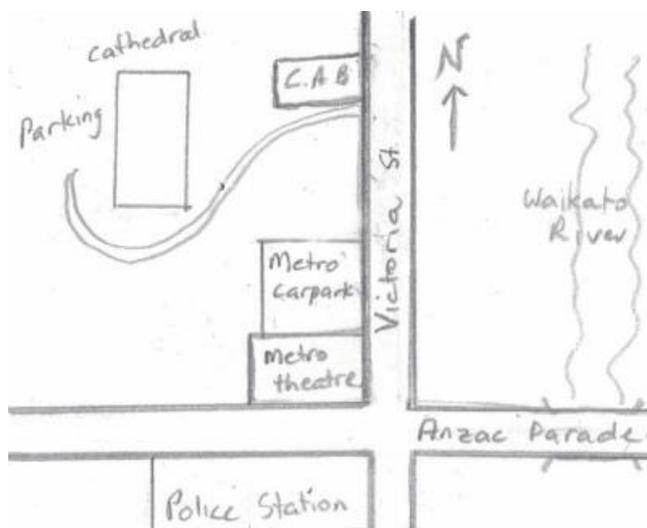
The meeting will be at the new venue in Victoria street- see sketch below,
and starts at 7.30pm

WTC meeting venue

In 1984 when I joined the Waikato Tramping Club, we were meeting at the Bowling club rooms on Pembroke St - now a martial arts training hall. From there the club moved to the boating club rooms by the Waikato River, but this wasn't ideal. In 1994, the then President Neil Rowe and myself looked at the St Stephen's Church Hall, and decided that it met all of our needs, and so the journey with St Stephen's started and has continued for 29 years. The St Stephen's church hall has proved to be a wonderful meeting venue. Sadly though, the decision was made to close St Stephen's at the end of June 2023 due to a number of considerations.

The club has been fortunate to have found a new home for our meetings which is in every way comparable to St Stephen's. Our new meeting venue is the St Peter's Cathedral Hall, 51 Victoria St, Hamilton Central with our first meeting being May 3rd. There is parking up the drive and around the back of the cathedral. Hopefully we will have as long an association with the Cathedral as we did with St Stephen's.

Ron Dick



Social activity: How would you like to sit back over a potluck dinner, sip your favoured tippie, enjoy the company of your tramping colleagues AND watch a movie? Come along to the club's movie night! There will be a 'half-time' interval for dessert and coffee too. The action will take place on **May 12th** at the Haines' place, starting at 6.30pm, at 11 Alison St, Hamilton. BYO your tippie, meat to BBQ, a dish to share & \$20. The function is open to all members and friends. For any more details contact Andrea & Graham on 0274822830.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2023

3058	15/16 Apr	M & M/F	Pahautea Hut	Allan Wickens
3059A	23 Apr	M	River crossing training	Allan Wickens
3059B	22/23 Apr	E/M	Turangi day walks	Les Warren
3060	25 Apr	E & M/F	Mangaokewa	Selwyn June
3061	30 Apr	E/M	Hakarimata west	John McArthur
	3 May		AGM CLUB NIGHT	Judith Bogle
3062	6/7 May	E/M	Broken Hills exploration	Allan Wickens
	12 May		FILM NIGHT	Graham Haines
3063	13/14 May	E & M/F	Waitawheta Hut	Allan Wickens & John McArthur
3064	20/21 May	M	Tongariro crossing	Les Warren
3065	28 May	M	Kohatupiko plug	Selwyn June
3066	3-5 June	M/F	Waitotara Forest	Judith Bogle
	7 Jun		CLUB NIGHT	
3067	10/11 June			Les Warren

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.

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

Remember: Click 'SUBMIT' to confirm your booking on the website

Trip 3058

Pahautea Hut on Mount Pirongia

15-16 Apr

This weekend trip involves an overnight stay at the popular Pahautea Hut on Mount Pirongia. Details have yet to be determined on how the two groups will get to the hut, where we have 10 bunks booked for our use. This is the first in a trilogy of pre-booked huts that have proven to be very popular and require booking well in advance (the other two are Waitawheta, Trip 3063, in May and Crosbies, Trip 3068, in June). All three trips involve an easy-medium (or M only), and fitter option. Of the three on offer, Pirongia is the hardest walk for some people and by making it an overnight trip, it becomes less strenuous.

There are several tracks leading to the hut, and we are aiming at having both groups go up via one and down the other. As this trip is some time away, please contact the leader (below) and your name will be put down for one of the two fitness level options. This also secures a bunk for the night. Formal registration can also be done when it appears on our on-line website.

Leader/s: Allan Wickens **Ph:** 027 950 9546

Grade: M and M/F

(and one other for the fitter option) **Ph:** tba

Email: allanwickens@hotmail.com

Transport: Senior members \$10-15 Senior non-members: members rate + \$10

(NB: as this area is close to Hamilton, we will probably be using private vehicles that will involve transport logistics from one trailhead to another.)

Accommodation: The Hut costs \$5.00 (adult price)

Trip 3059A **River crossing training** **23 Apr**

This training will be weather dependent whether it goes ahead. We really would like to aim this training to Club Members who have not done any river crossing training or it has been quite a while since they attended a course.

The Upper Waipa River runs over rock and shingle through a deep, mainly bush-sided gorge. It is a delightful stretch of river. We will cross a farm from Owawenga Road on the eastern side, descend to the river, then head upstream. As river skills are most important in tramping, we will give some instruction on choosing a ford, crossing techniques and recovery. It will be fun - in fact if you aren't having fun, you are not doing it right!

Preferably bring a weekend sized pack with everything placed in two pack liners or plastic bags inside a pack liner. The pack need not be heavy, but it will work better in the water if it is full - it doesn't matter what you fill it with, apart from the usual day trip gear, a towel and a change of clothes. The water temperature shouldn't be too cold, but bring a warm top or even a wetsuit if you wish. Nothing will be compulsory, but the more you do the more you will learn, and the more fun you will have.

Leader: Allan Wickens **Ph:** 027 950 9546 **Grade:** E/M

Transport: Senior member \$20-35 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3059B **Turangi day trips** **22/23 Apr**

We will base ourselves in Turangi and undertake day trips from the base. There are many options in the surrounding countryside and mountains and we will not be too far away from some nice hot pools – one of the possible accommodation options even has the pools onsite! There is a lovely day walk along the Tongariro river up one side and down the other past the trout hatchery. The beech trees will be looking particularly lovely at this time, we may spot who on the river, and there are lots of bellbirds near the hatchery too. The grades will depend on what we choose to do

Leader: Les Warren **Ph:** 027 8644937 **Grade:** E-M

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com

Transport: Senior member \$45-75 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Accommodation: tba

Trip 3060 **Mangaokewa track** **25 Apr**

Part of the Te Araroa Trail, this track follows the Mangaokewa River, south of Te Kuiti. We start in an attractive bush-sided valley in the Mangaokewa Reserve and carry on south in farmland (the reverse direction to that which we have done in the past) and bush close to the river. The track is mainly flat or undulating, but there are a few steep slopes to carefully sidle around or walk up. 15 km, 6 hours walking. An easier option would be for those wanting to do shorter legs to walk in with everyone else for a while and back to the vehicle with the driver then do the same thing at the other end to meet those who have walked the whole distance.

Leader: Selwyn June **Ph:** 0274 978151 or 07 8433066 **Grade:** E or M/F

Transport: Senior member \$20-35 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3061 Hakarimata walk 30 Apr

Track starts on a farm on Elgood Road, climbs through pines to a ridge and then along past where an airstrip was marked but now planted. Continue along ridge until you get to another ridge and saddle going east towards the Hakarimata ridge line. Go past the apparent easy entry to the ridge and approach it from the north side, bit of a mish if I remember right. The route is quite easy and follows a saddle which at times becomes more of a sharp ridge. Eventually this leads up to the main Hakarimata ridge.

At this point we could turn right and make for the lookout at the peak or turn left and head to the northern exit. That will be decided closer to the day.

Leader: John McArthur **Ph:** 021 2889641 **Grade:** M

Transport: Senior member \$20-35 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3062 Broken Hills explorations 6/7 May

The plan is to go to Pauanui Friday night in order to get an early start on walking in the Broken Hills area Saturday and Sunday as well. Several tracks are still open. We can stay the two nights at my daughter's nice and modern place at Pauanui Lakes Resort. If a full van goes it will be \$30 per night p.p. With 10 going a bit more. The place sleeps 6 officially but can easily accommodate a few more (bring a mattress).

Leader: Allan Wickens **Ph:** : 027 9509546 **Grade:** E/M

Transport: Senior member \$30 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3063 Waitawheta Hut in Kaimai Ranges 13/14 May

Staying overnight at this popular and often fully booked out hut, is a feature of this weekend trip. WTC have booked 10 places out of 26 bunks (all adult price). We will be taking the easy option of the Waitawheta Tramway route, following an old tramway (1898-1928) through the spectacular Waitawheta Gorge. This almost fully flat track takes 3-4 hours one way. Once at the hut, we will explore the surrounding area during the afternoon. If there is anyone keen to lead a fitter, more extensive route to the hut please contact the club captain.

The plan is to leave our normal departure site at London Street at 8.00 am on Saturday, returning late afternoon on Sunday.

Leaders: Allan Wickens – allanwickens@hotmail.com (easier option)

Transport: Senior member \$35-40 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Accommodation: Hut fee \$20.00 (senior price only).

Trip 3064 Tongariro Crossing 20/21 May

We will travel to the Waikato Club Hut early Friday evening of 19th May. As the DoC estimated time for the Crossing is between 7 and 8hrs, we will need an early start from Mangatepopo carpark on the Saturday. It will be getting darker earlier and the weather most likely will be getting cooler, hence an early start. We will stay at the Waikato Hut on Saturday 20th and have a sleep in on the Sunday before considering another shorter walk (*Ed comment: perhaps the walk across (yes! across) the lagoon at Owhangō*) and heading home.

Obviously, the weather will determine if it is safe to do the Crossing.
About the track – This challenging trip begins at 1120m, climbs the Mangatepopo valley to the saddle between Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe, through South Crater before climbing again to Red Crater, the highest point on the crossing at 1868m. You will then descend a steep, loose volcanic rock (scree) slope to the vivid Emerald Lakes. After passing Blue Lake, the track sidles around the northern slope of Tongariro, then descends on a long zigzag track down to the road end at 760m. More details will come out closer to the time.

We will need a very kind driver who can drop us off and pick us up.

Leader: Les Warren **Ph:** 027 8644937 **Grade:** F

Email: *warrenlb2017@outlook.com*

Transport: tba Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Hut fees: Senior member: \$50.

Trip 3065 **Kohatupiko plug** **28 May**

The Kohatupiko peak is an old volcanic dome, seen as a prominent peak on Mt Pirongia when looking at the south-eastern slopes of the mountain. Our route is up the Hihikiwi Track to the junction with the old Te Tahi Track. We will follow this track to the south-east to the peak of Te Akeohikopiro (869m) and then navigate off track through the bush towards Kohatupiko 'crooked rock' (785m). To get on to the top of the peak we will go around to the south side - the other slopes are steep rock faces. A grand view it to be had from the top. Return is by the same route. Walking distance: 9 km. Estimated walking time: 5½ to 6 hours. It helps that we start on the Hihikiwi Track at an altitude of 500m!

Leader: Selwyn June **Ph:** 8433066 or 027 497 8151 **Grade:** M

Transport: Senior member \$20-35 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3066 **Waitotara forest train track** **3-5 June**

The track is in the Waitotara Forest, between Wanganui and Taranaki. We will need to travel down on Friday, stay somewhere on the way and then travel to the beginning of the track on the Saturday morning.

We will do the track backwards from Puniwhakau to Tuamatatahi end. The huts only hold 6-8 people so some of us will need to take tents. On the first night we will stay at Puteore hut, second night Trains hut (will be a couple of 8 and 9 hr days). Then we come out on Monday from Trains hut which is approximately 4hrs, this part of the track has a couple of swing bridges and a pack horse track. There has been some tree fall around Poutere Hut so it may be a bit slower going in this area. From Puniwhakau to Trains hut there is beech forest, with kamahi and tawa. It is also the home to the North Island Brown Kiwi and Whio duck. Also be warned there will be streams to cross, so you will be able to use some of your river training this weekend.

Leader: Judith Bogle **Ph:** 027 3810283 **Grade:** M/F

Transport: Senior member \$45-75 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

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 Isla on 021 209 6539.

Editorial

What a busy time we have within the club at present. Lots of matters needing consideration by all members, not just the committee. A few glitches in the bulletin production of late have resulted in complaints to the committee. I accept these complaints. Much of the time leading up to getting the bulletin to the printer is spent chasing up information I have asked to receive by the Friday after club night and still not got to hand by Monday morning. I make every effort to ensure that all trips are advertised at least twice before they are to take place and this means that the last trip description each month is the one that occurs on the second week of the month – straight after the bulletin has been printed, (those who receive it by email or get it hand-delivered will be right up with the play). In an effort to reduce the pressure on me to get all the information together, and after discussion with the tramping captain, it has been resolved that all **future submissions for the bulletin will close on club night!!!** So that I then have 5 days to compile your entertainment. Any information not to hand by 10am the next morning will not be included in the next bulletin. You will have missed out advertising your trip for that edition. I hope that this works for us all.

Dianne June

Presidential Blog

Another summer season has passed and many of you have had great adventures and stories to tell. Now it is time for a re-set and to get some of the mundane chores done. We will be holding the AGM on the 3rd May 2023 at St Peter's Cathedral near the police station. This will be the first time we use this venue; more exploring and adventures to be had. I encourage you all to be there. Two areas that you will be interested in that will be discussed, are the changes happening in regards to RAL and the hut. Plus changes to distribution of the bulletin and FMC magazine. Again, I encourage you to come to keep up to date with what is happening in the club.

Judith Bogle

Quote of the month, "If you think adventure is dangerous, try routine, it's lethal".

...from the Ski Club...

Thanks to everyone who have attended recent working parties. There is still work to finish, so 1 more will be held in the near future advertised by email.

Upcoming snowcraft courses in July are a great opportunity to get to the Lodge to learn how to move safely in an alpine environment, so look out for those in the calendar. The early snow forecasts are looking very snowy so we are hoping that continues into a very snowy winter.

9 May is when the watershed meeting is due to be held for RAL and there is still no clear proposal for a new organisation and receivership is still possible.

Once we get confirmation there will be a ski season, we'll get ski membership rolling and invite you join the ski section. As a tramping member your overall fee is discounted 10%. Being a ski member provides advanced booking options, a member price of \$35 night, and discounted rates when you bring a buddy. Your membership pays for itself in 2 weekends so it's very good value.

See you at the Lodge in the upcoming months.

Stephen Prendergast

Upcoming season news from RAL as of 8/04:

Preparations are being made for the sale of 2023 season passes which will only be available during the campaign period and their numbers will be capped. They will include discounts off food and beverage, retail, lessons, and buddy passes. The purchase money will be held in third party trust account until the opening date can be confirmed. If the operation does not open, all money will be refunded (with terms and conditions of course). Life pass holders will be advised of progress as the voluntary liquidation process develops.

Trip Reports

Hard Work at work party

25/26 March

This was the second work party for the year; the first had left its mark with a tank room overflowing with solid looking native firewood.

The main aim of the work party was to stain and paint the outside of the Hut, weather dependent. After a misty start, Saturday gave us bursts of sunshine and a bit of warmth. By the end of the day work with the paintbrushes was mostly finished - even the west wall was warm enough in the late afternoon sun. The higher palings of the balconies were the most difficult to reach - not much fun on a shaky ladder - but, a very tall person with a roller on a pole was able to reach most places. To be finished later with a stronger ladder.

Sunday was showery as forecast, so the now-expert painters turned to interior jobs: front and back doors (now a vivid shade of red), internal doors and window sills. Repairs were also made to the plaster walls in the dining area; curtains were taken down and repaired (thanks Dianne). Etienne was again useful for reaching up to take curtain rods down and cleaning flues!

In keeping with Waikato Hut traditions, we had cheese or raisin scones for morning teas, cooked breakfasts (where else would you eat porridge, poached eggs, bacon, sausages, baked beans and spaghetti?), then roast chicken with roast beetroot,

pumpkin and potato followed by a sponge and pear pudding (thanks Margaret and Dianne). Then with a final clean we were off, out the door by 2.30 pm. Now we await the snow.

Helpers: Stephen Prendergast, Dave MacDonald, Ashley, Nicola, Jim, Dennis, Allan W, Les, Etienne, Margaret R, Beatrix, Selwyn and Dianne.

Trip 3049

A week in Lewis Pass

19 - 25 Feb

First, we had to get to the South Island, running the Cook Strait ferries gauntlet. Just a matter of dealing with last minute cancellations, rushing to book on the other company (or even both to get a better chance of a crossing), waiting in a queue for last minute cancellations, sleeping in the car and so on. Eventually, all three car loads and one wise airline passenger managed to assemble at Boyle River Outdoor Education Centre on the Canterbury side of Lewis Pass by Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. The centre is a very comfortable set-up with loads of room and a well equipped kitchen. As well as being an outdoor education facility for school groups it also serves as a stop off for Te Araroa walkers (\$5 showers) and a pick up for their food drops.

Our first foray into the wilds was on Sunday afternoon when we drove down to Windy Point, crossed a foot bridge over the Boyle River and started out on the Hope Kiwi Track leading us across open flats into beech forest on a terrace above the Hope River.



We had to stop and admire the orchids and gentians bordering the track as we went. This track carries on to Lake Sumner and is part of the Te Araroa Trail. We soon got used to the hum of wasps feeding on the honeydew on the tree trunks. Monday morning was a clear, fine day so we were off to the Lewis Tops, starting at the car park at the pass. It was a steady uphill climb for 3 hours or so; lunch at timberline and then on through the subalpine (low tussock, snowberry, *Celmisias*, *Dracophyllum*, etc) with views across to the ridges

and mountains in all directions; to the Spencer Mts to the east and Mt Haast on the Victoria Range to the west. Further along the ridge we came across a number of quite large tarns. As we retraced our route for home we were amazed at a mountain biker carrying his bike up towards us, and later, cycling down the track.

By now we were ensconced in the less salubrious Palmer Lodge, a NZ Deerstalkers Association building beside the highway and off grid.

You can't beat a cold wash in a cold stream each day. At least we had a fireplace, gas cookers and solar lighting.



Numerous in-depth discussions and gossip sessions were held in the evenings. One day when Dianne was home alone in the lodge she had a couple of cheeky visitors –



Time to do the dishes yet?

Photos by Dianne June

a pair of riflemen /titipounamu who came inside to look around every room and stop for a while on a window sill. Tuesday's target was Lake Daniells, starting further down the road towards Springs Junction. This was a leisurely 3 hour walk along a valley beside the Alfred River through airy, tall red and silver beech forest. Lunch at the lake beside or in the flash new DoC hut (to get away from the sandflies). Obviously a mecca for trout fishermen/women who cast their lines from around the lake shore. Wednesday was looking like rain so we did a valley walk into the Nina Hut and back. This is a restoration area with many stoat traps along the track and the birdlife reflected it with many bellbirds, riflemen, tui, a few falcon and brown creepers. We crossed the river on a high swing-bridge above a spectacular gorge

and, after several steep climbs along the valley side, we reached the hut in time for lunch, a pleasant place to stop out of the showers



Ambling along the beautiful Lake Daniells track

photo by Selwyn June

The return journey was quicker as the rain got heavier. Beech forest most of the way with a few grassy river flats. About 3 hours each way. Snow overnight and a cold, drizzly Thursday wore down our enthusiasm for tramping temporarily, so we headed to Hanmer Springs for restocking the food larders, laundry, cafe coffee, buying some firewood and going for a short walk in Hanmer Forest to view the wooden sculptures and admire the old exotic tree plantings. Not to mention a wee celebration for Selwyn's birthday the next day. Peter was given the task of disposing of a very large rubbish bag from our stay at the lodge but he had some

difficulty stuffing it into a municipal rubbish bin on the main street (the landfill was closed): it just wouldn't fit. We couldn't help him we were laughing so much. until Dianne put him out of his misery and the two of them managed to get the bag into the bin. Finally, we headed to the famous Hanmer hot springs for a soak - and they are warm.

Friday was another valley walk, this time along the St James Walkway alongside the Boyle River. We got about half way to Magdalen Hut, meeting the morning rush of TA walkers heading south. Another slightly wet day but a pleasant walk.

Saturday saw most of us heading out to Arthurs Pass via a morning tea stop in Culverden and lunch in the house of a former club member in Rangiora.

Thanks to our well organised trip leader Les for making the bookings, organising the itinerary and keeping us in line. It was a great summer holiday with a great bunch of trampers.

Participants: Les, Barb, Cathy, Helen, Peter, Dianne, and Selwyn (reporter).

Trip 3056

Hakarimata Traverse

2nd April

Due to track closures the original itinerary of the North Hapuakohe track was changed to the Hakarimata traverse.

Despite the clock change for the end of Daylight Saving eight keen trampers arrived at the correct time to the London Street carpark. The traverse is an A to B trip and so we parked vehicles at each end, with one in the middle just in case. It was great to be in EVs and to enjoy a ride in different models. Stephen joined the group at Ngaruawahia.

We scrubbed our boots on the DoC boot station at the Parker Road carpark and began our ascent in fog, the view from the Northern Lookout was white, and I admit we didn't walk down to the Southern Lookout as the whiteout continued. With Sophie and Cameron leading the way we set a good steady pace, which didn't mean we weren't puffing! The track is not maintained, and you have to walk with your eyes down most of the time from the Kauri Loop uphill junction to the Lookout platform near the helicopter pad and the top of the well-known Hakarimata Steps. Sometimes muddy and occasionally slippery I chose to walk with poles and came out mud splattered but not mud covered! There wasn't too much tree fall, we had to navigate around a couple of mudslides and falls but nothing to force us to turn around and return to the start point.

We stopped for lunch at the gas pipeline clearing, a much-appreciated rest as I am not track fit after a Covid infection at the end of January. The fog had lifted, we enjoyed some sunshine and the views to the East before plunging back into the bush, heading South.

At the Lookout platform we met a French family on a 12-month world tour with 2 children of primary school age. After some discussion we convinced them to descend the Waingaro track rather than going back down the steps they had just come up. I was grateful that John had carried excess water and he was grateful to decrease the weight in his backpack!

Continuing southbound, Stephen left the group at the steps, something about Formula 1. The 8 of us went down the Waingaro track at a faster pace thanks to the benched track. It was nice to be able to look around, not eyes down checking for trip and slip hazards. One small footbridge has been shifted about 5 metres up a gully as the piles had been washed out in January.

I'm not going to try to convince anyone that this is a track to yearn for; there are few views to the horizon when you're in the bush, which is 99% of the time. If you are a solo-walker the logistics of an A to B track are a challenge that might include a bicycle or hitching a lift. We covered 14km from the Kauri Loop car park to the Waingaro Rail Trail carpark. It was a great training trip for the 3 trampers going to Australia in May who were carrying extra weight in their backpacks. It was so nice to be out in nature again after some confinement and I really enjoyed the catch up with fellow trampers I haven't seen for months if not more. If you want a track that provides full immersion in North Island bush, then this would be a good one. There wasn't much birdsong other than piwakawaka fantail, perhaps they were roosting? Thank you to the trampers John (leader), Sophie, Cameron, Paul, Jim, Stephen, Ying, Lynley and Amanda (scribe).

From the committee table:

New members: Welcome to Rhys Jones, Sarah McLeay, and Annette Whittle. We hope you have many enjoyable excursions with the club in future.

Resignations: Vanya Whitelaw, Tony & Brenda Soutar, Chris Keith & Kareb Nunne, Tehnuka Ilanko

Membership: The club has 190 tramping members. There are still some membership fees not yet paid so it would be helpful to all involved if you arranged prompt payment for this.

From the tramping Captain:

1. Make sure you have read previous editions of the bulletin and made yourself aware of the positions and duties of the general committee positions listed.
2. As in past years, the Club Captain will run Trip Planning meetings in April and September (or thereabouts) for the following half calendar year. You are encouraged to put your ideas into these meetings to make the programme of trips to your interests. There is no limitation to the type of trip - kayak, mountain bike, river rafting.....
3. Posting everyone their copy of the FMC bulletin is proving rather expensive so it is being considered that future copies of it will need to be collected at club night. However, some of you may wish to have it posted to you so please make this known to the tramping committee. The cost of posting your monthly bulletin is also under consideration so watch this space and make your choice known.

We in the committee are looking forward to a great year and we hope you are too - get into it!!

Tramping Committee

Snippets from here and there...

- **Cellphone coverage in the hills.** Vodafone (One NZ) has announced a deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX to provide mobile coverage of the whole country for its' customers via Starlink satellite connections. This will mean customers could use their smartphones to connect via satellite when they were in areas without cellular coverage. For a start it will be restricted to text messages. Vodafone has stated that this service would be made available to Spark and 2Degrees customers for emergency calls, and to all emergency services. Everywhere in NZ and coastal waters will have cellphone coverage. This coverage will greatly increase our ability to connect with emergency services while out tramping in remote areas (as well as telling Mum we are fine).
- **Booking system** and a cap on walker numbers coming to **Tongariro Alpine Crossing.** According to an article in the April edition of Wilderness Magazine, big changes are coming to the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, including a booking system, one-way walking from Mangatepopo and greater cultural representation. During the busiest days pre-Covid, more than 2000 people would walk the track. This led to issues around human waste and heavy congestion. A new management plan intends to deal with these issues and will be implemented in stages from July this year [*note that tramping clubs haven't been consulted*]. As Mt Tongariro is sacred to the Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro and Ngāti Tūwharetoa, greater cultural representation is at the heart of the changes. Cultural interpretation rangers will be walking the track between October and April and even into the shoulder season. Concessionaires operating on the track must also undertake a cultural induction. The biggest change for track users will be the implementation of a booking system that will ultimately see a cap on the number of people walking the track each day. The booking system will be introduced in July but it won't be until October 2024 that there'll be a cap on daily walker numbers. All users of the Crossing will be required to book in advance of their trip. There won't be a charge. Another change is to make the track one-way only, starting at Mangatepopo. Ngāti Hikairo have requested this change for safety reasons. An 'environmental monitoring fee' is also being implemented. DoC will charge track transport concessionaires approximately 40 per cent of the per person fee DoC already charges concessionaires. Concessionaires will also be required to reduce their carbon emissions by running a modern fleet of vehicles. George Taylor, DoC operations manager, Tongariro, said it is inevitable that some concessionaires will not be able to meet these new requirements.
- *Bondarzewia kirkii* is a species of polypore fungus in the family Russulaceae that is endemic to the beech forests of New Zealand. *Bondarzewia kirkii* is a parasitic fungus that fruits on the roots of beech trees throughout New Zealand. It appears to be long lived and to fruit on mature beech

trees. It only has been collected from January through March, significantly earlier than most other macrofungi in New Zealand. There is very little other information about this fungus available on any website.



We saw 2 examples of this fungus during our walk along the Lake Daniells track. This particular one was about 40cm high and 30cm wide. The picture on the cover of this bulletin shows 2 that were up a slope from the track . The lower one was slightly smaller than that pictured here and the upper one was obviously smaller again. It was a stunning sight to see.

➤ WTC is very supportive of the conservation efforts of the Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society. And the Society very much appreciates this support. The Te Rapa DoC team have asked the Society whether the volunteers would be interested in doing a massive planting programme as a fundraising activity, to which the Society has said yes. It involves putting nearly 16000 trees in the ground around Lake Whangapae and Whangamarino swamps over the weekends of April 19/30 and May 6/7. It may be possible to stay at a marae in Huntly for the weekend to reduce travel expenses also. Your help for even just a single day would be most useful. If you are keen and willing to be part of this conservation effort, please contact Dianne June, ph 07 8433066 or email djune@xtra.co.nz.

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*...from the DoC website....*

✓ **Bookings** for New Zealand's iconic **Great Walks** are opening shortly, marking the return of international tourists for the full season. All bookings open at 9.30am on the dates as listed.

April 20<sup>th</sup>: Milford track

April 26<sup>th</sup>: Kepler, Abel Tasman Coast, Rakiura, Whanganui journey

April 27<sup>th</sup>: Routeburn, Paparoa, Tongariro northern circuit

May 16<sup>th</sup>: Heaphy - following extreme weather damage in 2022, the Heaphy Track can be booked from either end up to 19 October, with the full track expected to be open later in the year.

Still to be confirmed:

Lake Waikaremoana Track – is closed until at least 30 April 2023 due to flood damage. Check the Ngai Tuhoe website (external site) for updates.

Hump Ridge Track - DoC is currently working (with its partners) towards having the Hump Ridge Track attaining Great Walk status in October 2023. The Hump Ridge can be booked in advance through the Hump Ridge Trust as their booking system is

not limited to one season at a time. Once it is completed to Great Walk standard it will continue to be booked through the Hump Ridge Trust's booking system.

✓ DoC is urging everyone to be patient and careful when considering using DoC facilities. It will take time to assess damage, get engineering reports, and repair the damage. As these matters are attended to, notifications will be given so please check before you go as to whether you can actually do so. There is an amazing picture of the track to Cathedral Cove pictured with their news item on the website!

➤ **Whoio** take flight in Canterbury. 13 juvenile whoio/blue duck are now riding river rapids in Arthur's Pass National Park, after being helicoptered to their new home in January. 8 of the threatened-nationally vulnerable ducks were set free on the Edwards River and the rest on the Poulter River, both of which are on the Canterbury side of the park. Whoio are river specialists and one of the few waterfowl worldwide that live year-round on fast-flowing rivers. The ducks travelled to the park by helicopter from Christchurch where they were raised by the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust. DoC Biodiversity Ranger Antje Wahlberg said the eggs or newly-hatched chicks came to the Trust's Peacock Springs breeding facility from three captive pairs held at Orana Wildlife Park and Willowbank Wildlife Reserve in Christchurch, as well as from Kiwi Park Queenstown. "These pairs have been very successful in producing ducklings for later release into the wild. They have given us over 100 juveniles over the past five years. This success means we've been able to extend the whoio recovery sites in Arthur's Pass and release juveniles there as well as into the Central Southern Alps security site focused around the Styx-Arahura-Taipo valleys near Hokitika. Stoats are the greatest danger for whoio as they nest in areas where stoats commonly feed. Female whoio are frequently killed while on the nest. DoC partners with Genesis in the Whoio Forever Recovery Programme. Genesis' investment through the programme has included funding for over 5,000 traps protecting nearly 1700 km of river networks. The number of whoio pairs nationwide has increased from 298 to over 860 since the partnership began.

➤ A **kākāriki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet** population has been re-established and is already breeding in Hawdon Valley, in Arthur's Pass National Park, following four successful releases this summer. A total of 73 kākāriki karaka, a taonga species for Ngāi Tahu, have been released into Hawdon Valley. The most recent release saw 19 birds introduced to the valley on Saturday, April 1. Earlier releases took place in November, December and January. kākāriki karaka were previously found in the Hawdon Valley, but the population had declined due to predation to the point where monitoring in 2021 and 2022 was unable to detect any in the valley. Predator control efforts, including through a Jobs for Nature-funded predator trapping programme and large-scale operations using aerially applied 1080, reduced predator numbers to the point where it is safe for kākāriki karaka to be reintroduced.

➤ A Manawatu-based Jobs for Nature project is restoring habitat in the **Southern Ruahine** to bring a North Island **eastern brown kiwi** population back to the area. Ruahine Kiwi work to support the restoration and maintenance of the Ruahine Ranges so that kiwi and other native species can return and thrive. The project received \$930,000 through the programme to complete pest control in Southern Ruahine and has been running since September 2021, deploying and maintaining trap lines covering over 20,000 ha to date.

The team have collaborated with multiple external agencies and groups and have been able to extend their budget by utilising these relationships. Of note is the relationship they have built with Ryman Healthcare, whose residents have built 610 traps to date. The New Zealand Air Force also dropped 120 traps to the project area in November, saving the team many hours of labour carrying the traps to the top of the Ngamoko Range, and doubling as training for the Air Force members involved.

➤ The 2023 round of short-tailed **bat/pekapeka monitoring** has just been completed in the Pureora Forest. Walking into a dark forest full of bats might sound like a spooky movie scene to most people, but it's an exciting and rewarding field task for DoC staff. The 2023 round of short-tailed bat/pekapeka monitoring has just been completed in the Pureora Forest, one of New Zealand's biodiversity hotspots and a key location for the native mammals, which, under the NZ Threat Classification System, are classified as "at risk – declining". The monitoring information will be used to give an estimate of population survival and gauge the effectiveness of predator control programmes in the area.

Tertia Thurley, a DoC Technical Advisor, says this year's capturing and tagging of more than 200 bats marked a successful week in a favourable weather window.

The bat monitoring work involved setting up harp traps, which, as their name suggests look like harps with bags beneath them and capture the bats unharmed.

The Pureora work involved a team of 27 people, with 18 carrying out the capture and tagging of the animals, and nine others acting as observers.

Bats already tagged were let go, ones that weren't tagged were put into special bags and taken to a central area where a PIT tag was inserted. These PIT tags – the same sort of device used to microchip dogs – are used to individually identify bats as they fly in and out of known roosts. The roosts are equipped with aerials which can read the tag number and store this information along with date and time.

"We tagged 219 bats over three nights, surpassing our target of 200, and catching a good mix of juveniles and adults, males and females," Tertia says.

"During and after the tagging period – between 24 January and 10 February – the bat loggers were operating at roost entrances.

"These loggers detect PIT tagged bats going in or out of the roosts. The information collected includes the PIT tag ID of the bat, the date and time when the bat left/entered the roost."

Tertia says 788 individual tagged bats were detected, comprising animals tagged in previous years and newly tagged specimens captured during the 2023 work.

“I’m confident there are many more bats out there than the ones we tagged,” says Tertia, pointing to the value of the tags as providing crucial data to understand annual survival rates for the animals.

Pureora-based Biodiversity Ranger Troy McDonald, who contributed to the tagging work, describes the bats as “beautiful, incredibly unique and very feisty”, and the human team as “intelligent, passionate and lovely”.

“This Pureora population of pekapeka may be small in comparison to other Aotearoa populations, but they are unique because it is only here, they have been photographed feeding on and pollinating dactylanthus, a native parasitic plant also known as wood rose,” says Troy.

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...from the FMC website...

✓ The annual FMC photo competition is coming up in the next 6 months with club entries closing on Sept 15th. Having had an opportunity to hone your photography skills recently, why not use the time to practise, take some great shots of your activities and get them ready to enter into our own competition, which takes place beforehand.

✓ It is that time of the year again when we ask all our member clubs to think about **nominating someone for the Executive**. It is a stimulating body to work with, bringing together people from right around NZ and dealing with a wide range of outdoor recreation related issues. Likewise, if you are passionate about outdoor recreation and you support the work we do, if you have time and skills you’d like to contribute – especially in policy, planning, law, or administration – FMC would love to have you on board. Since FMC President Robin McNeill has decided not to lead our organization in the coming year, a new President will also be elected.

✓ *Oragene* are offering a special 10% discount code to FMC members so you can have access to your own trigger sprays to take with you on tramping and hiking trails. Keep Kauri Dieback at bay by using these products to spray your shoes before and after your hike. Products are biodegradable and recyclable so are friendly for the environment, and for you. The product SteriGENE included in the pack is the product that is in the cleaning stations currently (some are still labelled as TriGENE which is our old brand name for SteriGENE). The discount applies across the whole site, including basic home cleaning things such as glass cleaners, degreasers for BBQs/bikes etc and spray and wipe cleaners, as well as the kauri hiking bundle. Use code: **KAURIIKINGFMC**.

✓ There are more than 60 discounts available with your FMC card. Check them all out at on the website.

,,, ...from Forest & Bird...

➤ A colony of pekapeka has been discovered in the Rai Valley, Marlborough, bringing hope for this rarely seen species. A significant number of roosts were

discovered in Ronga Recreation Reserve, with some also found in both the Carluke Reserve and Brown River Reserve areas. Many more years of data are going to be needed to have a better understanding of the population dynamics, but the fact there are multiple thriving colonies is incredibly exciting.

➤ Forest & Bird is working with local iwi to restore the mana of **Lake Rotoiti**'s scenic reserves, its precious **pōhutukawa**, and weweia dabchicks. In any case, their growing site is doomed by the crumbling coastline. Ancient pōhutukawa are an important part of the scenic reserve network at Lake Rotoiti, north of Rotorua, but they are being browsed to death by possums. The mauri of the reserves, which were gifted by Ngāti Pīkiao to the Crown 100 years ago, is threatened by the possums' destruction of these taonga trees. They are part of the special character of the lakeside and play a critical role in structurally protecting Ngāti Pīkiao archaeological sites, including food and burial caves. Last year, Forest & Bird's Vice-President Kate Graeme, a regular visitor, approached the Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserve Board and explained possums were to blame for the dying pōhutukawa. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council stepped up to help, providing funding for more than half of the project's costs and invaluable practical support. Earlier this year, contractors working for Te Arawa Lakes Trust started removing the possums, who can each eat up to 3.5kg of vegetation a night and are particularly fond of pōhutukawa leaves. Pest control will take place in three initial sites – Otaramarae Bay/Te Rerengaotemokai Point, Te Arero Bay, and Puketapu /Honeymoon Bay. The Trust will also carry out rat and stoat control to help protect a nationally important population of weweia dabchicks. About 15% of the world's 2000-strong weweia population lives on Lake Rotoiti. It was gazetted as a public reserve for its scenic beauty in perpetuity.

➤ Forest & Bird's Ashburton Branch worked with scientists and landowners



for more than a decade to save a new species of **Canterbury daisy**. Two wire cages face the Pacific Ocean at Wakanui, coastal Canterbury. Inside are the last naturally occurring individuals of a small endemic daisy known locally as the Wakanui *Craspedia*. There is no hope for these two plants. They will not produce any offspring, but others have been safely translocated.

The plants may flower at different times, and the tiny hoverflies that pollinate the flowers may struggle with the conditions. Now there are more than 50 plants at four sites, as well as the original two, so the immediate crisis has been averted. Research by Ford & collaborators suggests *Craspedia* arrived from Australia. On the wind or carried by a bird 3 million years ago.



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