



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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

April 2024



Walking down to Homunga Bay photo by Allan Wickens

WAIKATO HUT

Your lodge on Mt Ruapehu
Tongariro National Park



www.wtc.org.nz



Stereopsis hiscens near L. Daniels
photo 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 860

April 2024

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 Jacqui Dick | |
| | Mike Barker Selwyn June | |

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### Tramping Subcommittee

**Tramping email:** [waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com](mailto:waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com)

|                         |                                                                                  |             |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Chairperson:</b>     | John McArthur <a href="mailto:mcarthur@outlook.co.nz">mcarthur@outlook.co.nz</a> | 021 2889641 |
| <b>Club Captain:</b>    | Les Warren                                                                       | 027 8644937 |
| <b>Membership:</b>      | Jocelyn Widmer                                                                   | 027 8664795 |
| <b>Member:</b>          | Selwyn June                                                                      | 027 4978151 |
|                         | Rupert Craggs                                                                    | 027 6811926 |
| <b>Transport:</b>       | Allan Wickens                                                                    | 027 9509546 |
| <b>Social convenor:</b> | Jacqui Dick                                                                      | 021 1375201 |

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Ski Subcommittee

Ski email: waikatoski@gmail.com

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Chairperson: | Stephen Prendergast | 021 466247 |
| Ski VP: | Stephen Phillips | 021 1031436 |
| Bookings: | Ashley Hoskin | 027 4909545 |
| Finance officer: | Michael Barker | 021 2463500 |
| Members: | Ashley Hoskin | 027 4909545 |

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|                                     |                                                                    |             |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Bulletin:</b>                    | Lesley Kuggeleijn                                                  | 027 4942414 |
| <b>Editor &amp; Club Librarian:</b> | Dianne June <a href="mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz">djune@xtra.co.nz</a> | 07 8433066  |

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

Club Night: Wednesday 1st May.

We meet on the first Wednesday of each month at St. Peters' Cathedral Hall.

The doors open at 7pm, meeting starts at 7.30pm.

This is our **AGM night**.

Come along and hear how the club's financial year and tramping programme have stacked up. Have your say or put your hand up to join the committee.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2024

| | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3118 | 13/14 Apr | M/F | Umakarikari/Urchin | Les Warren |
| 3119 | 21 Apr | M | Blackberry flat | Cathy Dickson |
| 3120 | 25 - 28 Apr | M/F | Exploring Tongariro Nat. Park | Les Warren |
| 3122 A & B | 10-12 May | E or E/M | Leitches clearing & track clearing | Theresa O'Leary & Judith Bogle |
| 3123 | 18 May | n/a | Outdoor 1 st aid | Les Warren |
| 3124 | 19 May | E/M | Fungi search – Otanewainuku | Theresa O'Leary |
| 3125 | 26 May | E/M | Kakepuku | Lynette Morris |
| 3126 | 1-3 June | M | Bridge to Nowhere | Sarah McLean |
| 3127 | 9 Jun | | | |
| 3128 | 15/16 Jun | E/M | Bushcraft | Les Warren |
| 3129 | 21-23 Jun | E/M | Waitakere 1 | Allan Wickens |
| 3130 | 28-30 Jun | tbc | Matariki | Les Warren & Judith Bogle |

As the Club Website Administrator is away in the South Island during March, the Club website won't be updated with April / May trips until he returns. If anyone wishes to register for a March, April, or May trip that is published in the Club Bulletin, please contact the Leader directly to register.

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 **TUESDAY** before the trip. Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip.

Departure Point: Weekend trips depart from the Gate 1 at Waikato University. Park closer to other vehicles as this area is security monitored. Leave on Friday nights at 7pm sharp unless otherwise stated. Day trips depart from London St at the river end- park on the roadside. Leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

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

1) Club Captain; 2) President; 3) a 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 long-johns/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 3118 Urchin – Umukarikari Loop, Kaimanawa Forest Park 13/14 Apr

NOTE: THIS WILL BE A DAY TRIP ON THE TRACK

Plan will be to travel Saturday 13th (probably the afternoon) to either the Urchin or Kaimanawa Road or Waikoko campsite and camp Saturday night to give us an early start on the Sunday.

Sunday 14th will be a big day walking – between 8hrs and 10hrs (DOC times). We may do quicker and should do quicker than 10hrs. However; walking times will be more if we have to do a 4km road walk, or not. Then, we will have the drive home. Have not decided which direction to take, yet.

Driver – It will be most ideal if we could have a Driver to pick us up at the end, otherwise we will have around a 4km road walk, which will had at least another 1hr walking on the trip. The Driver can walk part of the track we start on and walk part of the end track and meet the group.

Leader: Les Warren **Phone:** 027 8644937.

Grade: M/F

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com

Transport: tbc but probably a van.

Trip 3119

Blackberry Flat

20/21 Apr

This will be a tenting trip, camping on Saturday night at Blackberry Flat on the Gorge Track. We will begin our walk at Speedies Road end and finish at Were Road. Essentially the track follows the Tawarau River, beginning with an undulating climb through a farm landscape, then into the bush. This is limestone country, so there are interesting cliffs, rock formations, mini-chasms and spring

water flowing out of rocks next to the track. After a leisurely 3-hour walk to the campsite, we will set up camp. There is the option of extending the day by walking to Double Falls (3 hours return), or you could stay and relax at the campsite beside the stony beach and explore. Swimming opportunities are abundant for those who are keen. Sunday is approximately a 3 hour walk out through the forest to the farm and road end of Were road.

Leader: Cathy Dickson

Ph: 021 353 561

Grade: E/M

Transport: Senior member \$35-40

Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3120

Exploring Tongariro National Park

25-28 Apr

Making this weekend as a long weekend we will be a bit more adventurous by heading off-track a few times and include some exploring of the **Te Tatau Pounamu Wilderness Area** which is not visited very often. I have some trip notes from a 2022 trip and a 2023 trip (by Auckland Tramping Club).

The main plan is the following:

Wed 24th (late-afternoon) travel to National Park or Club Lodge for the night.

Thur 25th: From Whakapapa Village, walk the track to the Tama Lakes (a good warm up before the off-track stage). Follow the Tama Lakes track towards Upper Tama Lake, then turn right and follow ridgeline below Pt 1450, to Pt 1562. Option from here is to ascend Mt Tama (1623m) before descending to the Waihohonu Stream and to Waihohonu Springs to camp for the night.

Another option: From the end of the Tama Lakes track, continue ascending the spur to Pt 1650 then descend to valley and Waihohonu Stream to our campsite.

Fri 26th: Today we head east to ridgeline in front of us and ascend to the Waihohonu – Oturere Track and follow track to Oturere Hut. From the Hut we enter the **Te Tatau Pounamu Wilderness Area** for more off-track travel and aim for the Upper valley of the Mangahouhounui Stream for tonight's campsite. We will descend to the Oturere Stream from the Hut, cross the Stream and follow the ridgeline to a saddle just west of Pt 1673. We then follow stream to a waterfall and sidle west a bit before heading north to find a suitable area to camp.

Sat 27th : First, we ascend north before swinging to our left to ascend Te Maari (1739m) and Rotopaunga (1856m) and on to Blue Lake.

Options: From Blue Lake we can either descend to Ketetahi Car Park, OR, follow the Crossing Track to Mangatepopo Carpark (these options require a Driver to pick us up) OR, if we wish to extend this trip to four days, we could either camp / stay at Mangatepopo Hut (but, will need to book) or find a suitable camp site near water and walk back out to Whakapapa Village, thus making this trip a circuit.

When registering, please indicate whether you wish to do a 3 or 4- day trip. This will help with the planning. NOTE: This trip is also a tent-based trip and not using Huts except, maybe Mangatepopo if we head this way.

Leader: Les Warren

Phone: 027 8644937.

Grade: M/F

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com

Transport: tbc but probably a van.

Trip 3122 A&B**Leitch's Clearing****10-12 May**

Where is Leitch's Clearing?: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/waikato/places/whareorino-conservation-area/things-to-do/leitchs-track/>

Option A: Track clearing

I am going to take a group that wants to do track clearing with me on the Friday and stay at Leitch's hut for 2 nights. On Saturday we are going to head to Waikawau track and do track clearing, then come out Sunday.

I will be in contact with participants prior to organise what equipment we will need.

Leader: Judith Bogle**Ph:** 027 381 0283**Grade:** E/M**Email:** judith.bogle@outlook.com**Accommodation:** standard hut tickets.**Transport:** tba**Option B: Tramping**

Prep night: Wed 24 April – St. Peters' cathedral Hall. The 'Prep' learning will give you a list of what you will require, and enough prep time, for you to either obtain the items yourself or (via the leader) ask other WTC members if they have the right items/size for you to use/borrow ... and check they are right for you beforehand at the following the club night. You will learn/discuss what is required for a safe, comfortable overnight trip to a DoC hut or campsite.

The trip: Meet 8am Saturday, travel there, west of Pio Pio, for the 8 km/3 hour walk in – it's an easy tramping track along an old former road. Enjoy a relaxed afternoon/night in the hut, then a 'no hurry' packing up before our walk out the next morning.

If you are interested and/or have questions, please get in touch.

Leader: Theresa O'Leary**Ph:** 0274162633**Grade:** E**Email:** theresa.oleary.eme@gmail.com**Accommodation:** BYO Standard Hut ticket - \$10 adult \$5 for 5-17yrs**Transport:** tbc – private vehicles or a van**Trip 3123****Outdoor 1st aid****Saturday, 18 May****Venue:** Tamahere Model Country School**Facilitator:** Peak Outdoor Safety & Emergency Management

The Course will cover:

- Accident Site Management
- Patient Assessment
- Fractures & Dislocations
- Spine Injuries
- Head Injuries
- Bleeding, wounds and shock including crush injuries and amputations.
- Resuscitation including CPR and defibrillation.
- Medical conditions – heart, stroke and diabetes etc

- Burns, Poisoning
- Environmental emergencies – hypo/hyperthermia

Course participants will be challenged to problem-solve different emergencies and a lot of hands-on sessions. Classroom presentations will follow with extensive outdoor scenarios.

All participants will get a Certificate which will be valid for two years.

Course Fee: \$200 per person.

Registration: All participants are asked to register thru the Waikato Tramping Club Website or the club captain. Email registrations will not be accepted.

Further Course details will be sent to participants closer to the time and when / how to pay the Course fee. A discount for club members is being considered – get your name down first!

Trip 3124 Fungi search in Otanewainuku forest 19 May

This trip is for fungi fans – and people who want to spend a quiet time in native bush. A good trip to bring along younger children. We will leave 8am Sunday, travel over the Kaimais with private carpooling or van/bus depending on the numbers. Arriving there by 9.30. Pack layers of warmth, a lunch and snacks. Be prepared to have lots of time, to sit and just enjoy being in the bush, stopping for photos often and listening to native birdsong. We can break into smaller groups for separate walks and mix and mingle as we meet over the day.

We won't leave again until 3pm, getting us back to Hamilton at 4.30ish.

This will be a fine winter weather trip only – any storms, high winds or heavy rain – it will be cancelled.

Ōtanewainuku is covered in virgin unlogged forest and is home to a variety of native birds and animals. Large emergent rimu trees are common. Tawa, kamahi and rewarewa form a high canopy and bird species such as robin and bell bird are readily seen and heard. Since 2002 a volunteer trust, Ōtanewainuku Kiwi Trust, has helped conserve the precious wildlife of Ōtanewainuku. Kiwi, whiteheads and forest gecko are all found here. Recent releases of kiwi and kōkako have proved successful.

Rimu Loop Walk: 45 minutes return, 1.8km Last time I visited in fungi season this track alone took us 4 hours! Starts from the opposite side of the road near the carpark. This gently graded walk with some impressively large rimu trees is suitable for walking children. It's not suitable for strollers or wheelchairs.

Summit Track: 90 minutes return, 2.3km. The loop track to the summit starts behind the shelter and is reasonably steep in parts, but the view from the top is worth the climb. A tower constructed on the summit (640 m) offers panoramic views from East Cape to Mount Tarawera and Rotorua, and across the Mamaku Plateau to Mount Ruapehu.

Whataroa Falls: 1 hour each way. For the slightly more agile, a well-marked route branches off the Rimu Loop Track after 15 minutes and undulates through the forest to the Whataroa Falls. The waterfall is a popular swimming hole and picnic

spot. Explore this lovely stream with cascades and pools before returning the same way. So, there are 5 hours of possible tracks to walk and 5½ that we will be there – something suitable for everyone! Starting point details next month.

Leader: Theresa O’Leary

Ph: 027 416 2633

Grade: M

Email: *theresa.oleary.eme@gmail.com*

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

or private vehicles.

Trip 3125

Kakepuku

26 May

Kakepuku is a volcano situated 10 minutes from Te Awamutu, where we will walk on a shared mountain bike trail that gently climbs up through regenerating bush to the summit which has magnificent views of the surrounding Waipa and Waikato landscape.

The first 3/4 of the track gently sidles around and up the mountain after which the track continues along the ridge through native forest in the ancient crater. There are a few steps to be climbed at the end to get to the lookout tower, which has information boards detailing the historical and cultural significance of the reserve. This is an easy walk but is pleasant with tui and kereru often seen and heard in the reserve. I would suggest bringing a thermos to have morning tea at the summit.

Expect to walk three hours in total and we can stop for a social lunch afterwards.

Leader: Lynette Morriss

Grade: E

Judith Bogle

Ph: 027 3810283

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3126

Bridge to Nowhere

1-3 June

This is a 42 km one way track in Whanganui National Park. It commences on the west side of the Park at Kohi Saddle north of Stratford and crosses the Park eastward to the Whanganui River. Following an old road line, the track has a relatively even gradient, no river crossings and passes through native forest for most of its length, providing shelter from the worst of the weather. This is a lightly maintained track and may have windfalls, slips or be overgrown.

The plan is to drive by shared private car/s (let me know if you can take a car to Te Wera Lodge on Friday evening leaving Hamilton about 4pm and staying the night at Te Wera Lodge, 50 minutes from the start of the track. The first day will end at Pouri Hut after an 8-hour walk including a return side trip to the summit of Mount Humphries. The second day involves 7 hours walking to Puketotara Hut. The last day is 1.5 hours out to the Whanganui River and a 1.5-hour return walk to the Bridge to Nowhere. A jet boat will provide transport to the short Bridge to Nowhere track and then back to Pipiriki where the car or cars will have been relocated.

Huts are all backcountry and require passes or tickets. First come, first served. Tents must be carried as a back-up. Those who have a two-person tent might want to share to lighten the load given that hopefully they won’t be needed. Trip cost is likely to be between \$339 and \$538 depending on numbers. This includes travel

contribution, vehicle relocation and jet boat. It excludes the hut pass or ticket cost and any other costs such as food.

Leader: Sarah McLeay

Ph: 020 408 96364

Grade: M

Transport: Senior member \$339-538 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Hut fees: Please sort these out yourself.

Allan Wickens is planning on having two weekend trips to the Waitakere Ranges as a "combo". The first will be in **June** and the second either **September to November**.

The plan is to stay at the Auckland Tramping Club's Hut in the Waitakeres. The cost for the 21-bed hut is \$180 per night - for the whole hut. I would prefer to have just our Club at the hut. This means if only 10 go it's still very good value at \$18 per head.

I need to book online and as their booking system shows the vacant weekends are shrinking in number, would like to book ASAP. I also need to have things ready for the upcoming Bulletin/online and trip planning meeting.

Mid-week Walks & Tramps

We have 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 is via the Mid-week W & Ts Group page on WhatsApp. If you would like to be part of this communication, please download WhatsApp on your phone and text your request to Isla on 021 209 6539.

Kayakers unite

Who is interested in kayak trips? Perhaps a bit similar to the 'Tramping on Bikes' trips. Some for a single day trip, some with overnight camping. Some where you might hire a kayak when we get there, many where we will each need to have one and bring it.

If you are interested and would like to join in, please email me your permission theresa.oleary.eme@gmail.com to add you and your mobile phone number into a WhatsApp 'WTC on water' group and that will get us off to a beginning. And do send suggestions for trips, and how you personally might help get this group off to a great start.

Theresa O'Leary

Editorial

Now that our year is fully up and running and everyone is enthused about being out in the bush, how about thinking how you can give back to the club, your tramping colleagues, and the environment we all enjoy? There is a trip planning meeting coming up and a dearth of trip leaders. How about considering being a mentor to get a potential leader on the rungs of leadership? It requires a bit of effort but pays off later on when our small list of leaders has expanded and you aren't asked so frequently to lead a trip. If you're already a confident leader, please do put your name forward and not leave it to the same people to put their hands up every time.

And while you're thinking about a trip, why not consider being a driver? A to B trips require that the transport be moved. Often you have the opportunity to relax, perhaps enjoy a coffee en route, or perhaps go for a short walk, or even walk towards the tramping party from the end at your leisurely or fast pace.

And of course, there's the club governance up for discussion at the GAM.

A couple of weeks ago I was fortunate enough to be able to do the Homunga-Waihi coastal walk. I am grateful to our 2 drivers who enabled us to dawdle along the track at a leisurely pace.

This is not a long walk (fortunately) so I must thank everyone for coping with my slow pace. I'm pleased it meant you had lots of time to take photos and I've seen some good ones already. This edition of the bulletin includes the trip report and some of those pictures. The splash in the cold seawater of Waihi was most welcome. I don't usually go straight into cold water but this time it was just the right thing to do. No such things as warming of the ocean on that day! Even better than the ice-block I had afterwards.

And on the subject of trips – I will be following up on trip reports from all those neat places you have visited over the past few months and not told the rest of us about.

Presidential Blog

Next month the AGM is going to be held at the next Club night on the 1 May 2024. We need as many people as possible there to approve the forward year coming 2024/2025.

This is my last year as Club President, that is my 3 year term is up. So, we are looking for a new President to step into my role. I'm afraid if no-one steps up then the Club will no longer have one. If anyone has concerns about doing the job they should not worry because I will still be there for support plus there is a very supportive committee as well. I have to thank all the committee members for their hard work. I know sometimes it can be trying but with your fortitude we have been able to establish new things and blend with the times.

Also, we are looking for a new social convenor. Jacqui is looking at stepping down and needs a replacement. Jacqui has also been doing this role for the last 3 years and is now looking for a change. Thank you for all your hard work and the fun you have brought.

Another area is leaders for trips. It has been seen that the majority of the trips are falling to a few. So we are looking for more leaders to spread the load. Each new leader gets support and shown the ropes, so no you are not thrown in the deep end. Thank-you to the ladies who have put up their hand to help. We still need more to spread the load. With more people, new ideas and suggestions will help with diversifying our trips. As you will have seen there is a gap in the April calendar and this is due to there not being enough leaders available to fill all the gaps. So please put your hand up to help otherwise these gaps will become a common

occurrence. The next trip planning meeting is at the St Peter's Cathedral on the 17th April at 7pm.

For any of these roles please contact me 0273810283.

Judith

Ski club

The government has stumped up with some more money to keep the skifield going for another season but what will happen after the end of it this year? In the meantime, season passes are available for purchase.

As for our Hut, the hut maintenance necessary to keep it running has been undertaken but not completed. Watch this space for the starting date for winter hut fee rates, and what they will be. There is a ski club meeting being held at about the time you are reading this bulletin.

Trip Reports

Trip 3102

Kawekas

3-6 Feb

On Friday late-afternoon 3 intrepid trampers left town and drove south to Taihape for the night. We stayed at the Rusty Nail Backpackers, a comfortable place for a good sleep.

Saturday was day 1 in the Kawekas with the weather forecast for showers, some rain, and strong winds. We left Taihape at 0655 and arrived at the Lakes Carpark at 0830. We left the carpark soon after and arrived at Kuripapango Trig at 1015 but did not hang around too long as it was quite windy. Great views tho. We walked another 10min to a track intersection and had a brief break. Left here at 1030 and arrived at Kiwi Saddle Hut at 1230. Sidling along a exposed ridgeline we started to encounter strong winds with the last 30min having rain, hail, strong winds with the temperatures dropping quite a lot.

The original plan was to consider moving on to the Kiwi Mouth Hut but, with everyone feeling cold and wet and the weather not looking too good, we decided to stay the night at Kiwi Saddle Hut. Tomorrows' plan was to head to Manson Hut via Kiwi Mouth Hut.

Sunday arrived, and, after a good breakfast we left the Hut at 0745. Track was generally well signposted. The higher open areas were slow going due to navigating the scree. DoC time is around 2-3hrs to Kiwi Mouth Hut but, it took us 4.5hrs, arriving around 1215. There are two track options between the two Huts – the high route (which we took) and a river section (which turns out to include many river crossings). This section was quite tough on my legs and knees, especially with the steepish long downhill sections so, I opted to stay the night at Kiwi Mouth Hut. Jim and Dale were keen to continue up to Manson Hut for the night. So, after dumping food and gear that they wouldn't need, they set off. The Kiwi Mouth Hut is in a great location close to the Stream with plenty of flat areas for camping which is what I decided to do as the Hut has only 4-bunks and the weather was nice for camping. As it turned out, my camping was a fortunate move as four others

arrived mid-afternoon and planned on staying in the Hut (not sure whether they had tents or not).

Monday, it was thought that Jim and Dale would return to the Kiwi Mouth Hut around lunch-time but, the trip back down the ridge was much quicker, hence they arrived around 1000. After they had a good break and I finished packing, we left the Hut at 1100 to head back up to Kiwi Saddle Hut for the night. Our only significant ascent started just from Kiwi Mouth Hut which took us 2hrs to reach the top, where we found a lovely spot with great views for a break.

Five minutes along the track is an intersection with another track that takes one back to the track we took in from the Lakes Carpark to Kiwi Saddle Hut. There is also another track off this one that heads down to Cameron Hut. Looking at the map, this different way back to Kiwi Saddle Hut looked less steep. There were some lovely open beech forest sections, and we passed some massive rock ridges. At one point we did lose the track and missed a sign but we quickly found where we went wrong and didn't lose too much time. From Kiwi Mouth Hut it took us 605 hrs to Kiwi Saddle Hut, with another 2 -3hrs for Jim and Dale. With our two nights at Kiwi Saddle Hut, we were the only ones there.

Tuesday arrived and we all were looking forward to a mostly downhill walk back out to the Carpark. The first hour was however mainly uphill before we could enjoy the long downhill section back to the Carpark. Not sure when we got back to the car but probably around late-morning. There were quite a number of cars at the carpark when we returned so it must be a popular place to go tramping or do a short walk to the Lakes.

Overall, another wonderful weekend but, the body was quite tired after two consecutive long weekend trips in rugged terrain. Group was Les (Leader and scribe), Jim and Dale.

Trip 3111

Homunga Bay to Waihi beach

17 Mar

Nine people left from the usual weekend meeting point in Hamilton.(Note to self: remember not to park in the car park but on the road side). Here I met up with Robyn Colman a member I have not for many years and after all this time she still hasn't managed to lose her Australian accent.

Then on to Ngatitangata road end and the start of the track, where we were met by Debbie and Dave from Whangamata who originally were going to transfer the minibus around to Waihi beach.

It was also years since I first did this walk, actually it was not long after the boat Rena had gone to ground on the Astrolabe whilst trying to take a shortcut into Tauranga Port. The walk was a little steeper and rougher than what I remember - funny how your memory plays tricks for you like that. After a short time through the paddocks down we went to Boat/Homunga Bay where we had a quick walk on the beach and a snack enjoying the gorgeous early autumn weather.

Then up and around to Orokawa Bay, deciding not to go the Wright waterfalls. We lunched in the shade of old trees and again walked along the beach relaxing and watching the activity on the water.



Robin & Selwyn looking down into Homunga bay

photo by Dianne June



Allan and Bea deliberating on the strength of the rock

photo by Dianne June

Walking up out of the bay around the eroded track and the top of Shark Bay coming out at Rapatiotio bay or the start of Waihi beach after completing the track of 9.5 kms. Some went for a swim, some went for a paddle some just went to the ice cream shop and had a chat with old friends. Great day out to a beautiful part of the country and a easy day walk with great ocean views.

Many thanks to Selwyn for organising the two drivers and those also on the trip were Amanda, Prativa, Steve, Peter (scribe), Bea, Karen, Allan, Robyn, , Dianne, Nicola and Debbie & Dave from our Whangamata branch) - on a great trip

From the committee table:

New members: We welcome Wendy Oliver, Harry Mowbray, and Gail Price.

Resignations: Jan Foster and Mary Hsu.

Membership: The club has 184 tramping members.

From the club captain:

TRIP LEADERS: The following dates have no club trip or leader scheduled. Can leaders please consider leading a Club trip on these free dates:

(Note: Saturday 18th May is Outdoor First Aid Course), 09 June, 28 - 30 June, Matariki Weekend.

TRIP PLANNING: It is time to plan the programme for July to December This is prior notice that the Club Trip Planning meeting will be scheduled for 17th April at our usual meeting place/. Please start thinking about trips for the July to December 24 period.

I would like to see that trips put forward have a Leader rather than having to keep chasing for Leaders and trips myself. I will not be in a position to jump in and fill gaps between July and September.

Les Warren

Snippets

Hygiene alerts.

1. On a recent visit to the Okahukura valley Dianne & Selwyn collected a water sample for eDNA testing (we're helping develop a method to detect kokako that will eventually be used for seeking out the south island kokako). The results came back recently and had a rather scary component to it – the chytrid fungus was detected when it has not been detected in samples taken over the past 2 years. Not far from the valley is a protected site for Archey's frogs so this finding is of major concern for everyone who travels in the north Pureora forest. The amphibian chytrid fungus invades and damages a frog's skin. The fungus kills frogs by affecting the balance of electrolytes causing heart failure and frogs are more susceptible when their immune system is weakened by other factors – e.g. pollution or increased UV. The fungus has been confirmed in introduced frog populations all over New Zealand and in native frog populations on the Coromandel Peninsula and in the northern Whareorino Forest in the King Country. The fungus relies on damp conditions to survive and to spread. It can be spread from frog to frog contact or

through contact with infected soil and water. People, animals (e.g. pigs & deer), 1. or vehicles can spread the amphibian chytrid fungus by moving soil and water around on their boots, gaiters or equipment. Strict hygiene protocols apply to people entering and leaving native frog habitat. A 2% trigen/sterigene solution or 1% bleach should be used to clean equipment, footwear, gaiters, dogs' feet and any other items used in the field.

2. At a recent meeting with DoC Te Kuiti staff, Dianne & Selwyn were advised that **totara blight** has been detected in the Pureora area also.



It is caused by a fungus-like organism *phytophthora podocarpi*. (note the kauri dieback organism is *phytophthora agathidicida*). It was first reported in Gisborne in 2011 and has since been found around much of the north island but not yet in the south island. Its' symptoms are most obvious in winter and spring, starting with needles turning a khaki colour, often becoming black and then falling off. Shoot tips may also die but retain dead, browned needles, giving the tree a fire-scorched appearance. Any symptomatic material should be sent to Scion's ForestHealth Reference Laboratory. Tōtara blight can also be reported via the Find-A-Pest app. It can be downloaded free from the Apple or Android app stores. Open the app, join the forestry sector from the settings menu and choose forestry on the front page of the app. You can then take a photograph to report any suspected sightings, this will automatically notify Scion pathologists.

In order to help protect our environment from these diseases, please ensure you always have clean footwear and gaiters when you go tramping in any forest.

Moral of these stories:

Please ensure you always start your tramping with clean gear

This means footwear, gaiters,, coat, & pack .

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

➤ **Wairere Falls Track closures:** DoC is removing and upgrading stair and bridge structures along the Wairere Falls Track. For the month of March, the Track will be closed to the public including weekends for safety

reasons. From April it will be closed from Mondays to Fridays until approximately June 2024.

➤ **Pakake/sea lions** in Dunedin have had the best breeding season on record, with more than 30 pups born. DoC Coastal Otago Biodiversity Ranger Jim Fyfe says 29 pups have been tagged to date. “We’re thrilled with this result, which is a big jump from the 21 pups tagged last season. It’s fantastic to think how far the species has come since the first sea lion to breed on the mainland, known as Mum, had her first pup here in 1993. “Interestingly, we never found the birthplace for at least a dozen pups; for all the ones born in very public places, there were many others that managed to remain hidden away. This is amazing, given how populated our coastal areas are, and there was some effort made to search more isolated areas. The pups are now getting more active and venturing out from their birthing sites. Although they are “creching” (or congregating so they can interact to learn through play) they are still mobile and may appear in unexpected places in coastal areas. Pups are reliant on their mothers for about 11 months. People are asked to keep an eye out for sea lions, especially when driving on coastal roads – please slow down, it could save a sea lion’s life.”

The New Zealand sea lion is one of the rarest sea lion species in the world, with a threat status of Nationally Vulnerable. They have a total population of about 12,000 but the vast majority live in the Subantarctic Islands, with only a small number found in Rakiura/Stewart Island, Southland and Dunedin. There are thought to be 34 breeding females in Dunedin, with about 160-200 sea lions in the region in total (the number fluctuates as the males move around).

➤ DoC is asking the public for help after a quad biker drove down the Cave Creek Memorial Track/Kotihotiho. The quad bike got as far as the top of the first set of steps, scuffing the sides of the walking track and leaving tyre marks in its wake. DoC Buller Acting Operations Manager Chris Hickford says the biker’s actions show a total lack of respect for the Cave Creek Memorial. It’s the latest in a series of incidents up Bullock Creek Road, which leads to the memorial site, he says. “The locked swing arm which prevents access to the old bridge up there was pulled out on one occasion. The lock on that gate has also been destroyed several times, and the gate to the start of the Memorial Track has been smashed multiple times. “It’s hugely disappointing to see such inconsiderate and anti-social behaviour and the impact it has on other visitors and the natural environment. “Repairing this damage takes our staff away from critical conservation work. It’s incredibly frustrating for them to see their effort and commitment deliberately wrecked by others.” The quad biker gained access to the pedestrian only track leading to Cave Creek Memorial Track/Kotihotiho by forcing his machine through a pedestrian entrance. If the public has any information about who this person might be, or other information about any damage done at any time, they are urged

to provide information to DoC. This will be kept strictly anonymous, Chris Hickford says.

➤ **Ulva Island**/Te Wharawhara near Stewart Island/Rakiura is rodent free once more, DoC announced recently. The pest-free open sanctuary has been the subject of a month-long incursion response after a rat was found dead in a trap in February. DoC Rakiura Operations Manager Jennifer Ross says that after more than four weeks of increased surveillance, intensive trap checks and comprehensive monitoring work across the island, there have been no further rodent detections. “This means we’re winding down our incursion response and returning to normal surveillance measures. Normal surveillance doesn’t mean we’re taking our foot off the pedal; far from it. Having an intensive network in place round the clock means when we do get a detection – like we did in February – we can act quickly and scale up.” Ulva Island is one of the few pest-free open sanctuaries in New Zealand. It is home to vulnerable native species like tieke/South Island saddleback, mohua/yellowhead, titipounamu/rifleman, and South Island kākā. Since 20 February DoC staff have checked over 225,000 trail camera images, walked more than 110 km of trap lines, travelled more than 180 km by dinghy, and completed over 2,750 trap checks. Two rodent detection dogs also scoured the island multiple times. “Given how close Ulva is to mainland Rakiura – just 780 m at its closest point, and how many people visit it, incursions are frequent, averaging between 1 and 2 incursion events each year,” says Jennifer. “Catching rats in traps is a key way we detect and remove invaders and protect the island from rat populations becoming established.”

The island was first declared pest free in 1997. In winter 2023 a breeding population of rats established on the island sparking an intensive re-eradication programme. In the months since the eradication took place, monitoring – including trap checks, motion sensitive camera surveillance, and the use of rodent detection dogs – had not shown any sign of rats remaining on the island, until one was found in February. As part of last year’s re-eradication response, the island’s biosecurity system was upgraded with more trail cameras, more frequent trap checks and a rearranged grid increasing detection control devices in the coastal area where rodents usually arrive. However, Jennifer says keeping Ulva Island pest free will continue to be a challenge as long as there are pests on mainland Rakiura. “That’s why initiatives such as Predator Free Rakiura are so important, and everyone has their part to play. “We’d like to extend our thanks to everyone for doing their part and continuing to be extra vigilant when visiting Ulva Island. Special mention to the Ulva Island Charitable Trust who have offered to donate \$5,000 to the response.”

➤ Changes to Great Walk prices and DoC discount policies. “It has been more than four years since prices were reviewed and upkeep costs have risen significantly since then,” says DoC’s Director of Heritage and Visitors, Cat Wilson. “From 1 July, Great Walk hut and campsite prices will increase by 18%

except for Paparoa which will increase by 6%.’ There will be no price increase for visitors using DoC facilities on the Lake Waikaremoana Track. The track is part of Te Urewera, which is spoken for and governed by the Te Urewera Board.

Decisions about price increases relating to Waikaremoana would be taken by Te Uru Taumatua – Ngāi Tūhoe’s operational entity, and DoC together.

“While Great Walk fees don’t cover the full costs, the revenue raised contributes to maintaining, repairing, and improving the huts, campsites, tracks, and structures and balances the cost burden between users and taxpayers. While 18% is a sizable increase, the prices were last reviewed in 2019/20 and research shows that the fees paid to DoC for these Great Walks are typically just a small proportion of the overall cost of peoples’ trip. Great Walk experiences continue to be affordable, with options ranging from \$19 to camp on the Abel Tasman to \$92 for a hut on the Milford Track at peak season for New Zealand residents. Fees for international visitors remain at a 50% premium to NZ resident fees on most Great Walks.

“DoC is under increased budget pressure from rising construction and maintenance costs and reduced revenue due to the impacts of inflation, extreme weather events including Cyclone Gabrielle, and other economic pressures on New Zealand.

“As part of the review, we are also reintroducing youth and child fees (5-17 years) for the Great Walk facilities which will be 50% of the adult fees. This is in line with youth and child fees at other DoC huts and campsites. Data shows the “youth go free” approach adopted in 2008 did not noticeably increase children and youth participation on the Great Walks. In some cases, it was even used to hold places on the walks for free, then either not used or cancelled at the last minute, preventing others from being able to book a place on those dates. The Department has also reviewed its discount policy and is providing for the first time ever, discounts to people who hold a community services card. We’ve made some adjustments to historical discount holders. Those changes mean we are now able to offer a new 25% discount to people who have a community services card. “There’s also changes to Reward Discounts for organisations contributing to conservation and recreation with the maximum discount reducing to 20%. No one likes a price increase. But it is great we’ve been able to offer more discounts to those New Zealanders doing it the hardest in the current economic climate. It is also worth noting that the country is incredibly well served with a huge variety of scenic DoC walks and facilities with price points for all budgets, including many that are free for everyone to enjoy,” says Cat Wilson.

Note: Opening dates for booking huts, campsites and Great Walks for 2024/25 will be announced in April.

....from the FMC website....

➤ *Epic* giveaway. We have some copies of the new Ray Salisbury's book *Epic* to give away! In return, we would love to hear some of your stories about epic facts and fables in the outdoors. What was a fact and what turned out to be a fable? Hut

still on the map, but not there after 9h tramp? A piece of glacier floating in the lake or a tail of taniwha? What was that strange noise outside the hut in the dark? A kākāpō or ...? Send us your stories - the best ones will be published on *Wilderlife* and you'll receive a copy of *Epic* – a book about some of the most epic adventures of Kiwi explorers. Entries should be 800-1200 words, with 4-5 captioned photographs. FMC is the judge of the competition, and our decision is final. Runners-up will still have their stories featured on our *Wilderlife* blog. By entering you give permission for FMC to publish your entry on our website. Please send your stories to communications@fmc.org.nz.

➤ FMC is deeply concerned about the proposed Fast-track Approvals Bill, which the government announced last week. FMC president, Megan Dimozantos, said “The Bill is the biggest assault on democracy and nature that Aotearoa New Zealand has seen in decades. Under the new law, many areas of public conservation land, which belongs to all New Zealanders for the protection of natural intrinsic values in perpetuity, will become exposed to economic exploitation excluding a democratic process, or even appropriate scientific and judicial input. These are places we care deeply about. The impacts of the Bill would be irreversible, a reminder for future generations of how little this government cares about the environment and the places we value.”

The proposed Fast-track Approvals Bill, if approved, will give Ministers personal power to approve fast-track development projects on public conservation land. It will override the Conservation Act, Reserves Act, Wildlife Act as well as RMA and other relevant Acts.

Rights to appeal will be constrained. Alongside the Bill, the government is planning to introduce a list of key projects to be fast-tracked. The list has not been published yet, but as the government indicated, it will most likely include open-cast coal mining and hydro-power generation on public conservation land. FMC fears this list will include wild rivers, with high natural and recreational values. The schedule of these projects will only be published after the consideration of the Bill, which allows no public consultation on which projects are fast-tracked. Such a process allows little space for any environmental criteria and is non-democratic.

FMC is reviewing the Bill and will formulate a submission in the coming weeks. We are also considering options to support clubs with their submissions. Our executive and president are in consultation with other environmental NGO leaders to determine the most effective strategy to prevent this from being fully implemented.

With one-third of the landmass being public conservation land, Aotearoa New Zealand has enjoyed a worldwide reputation as a clean, green country. With the new Bill, this reputation, or what is left of it, risks being lost. FMC will act to protect the integrity, intrinsic worth and values of the land that belongs to all of us, but above all, it belongs to nature itself. Its importance and worth outweigh the

short-sighted economic interests of a privileged few and should never be compromised.



Some pics from the photo competition....



Untitled

Leitches clearing

photo by David Totman

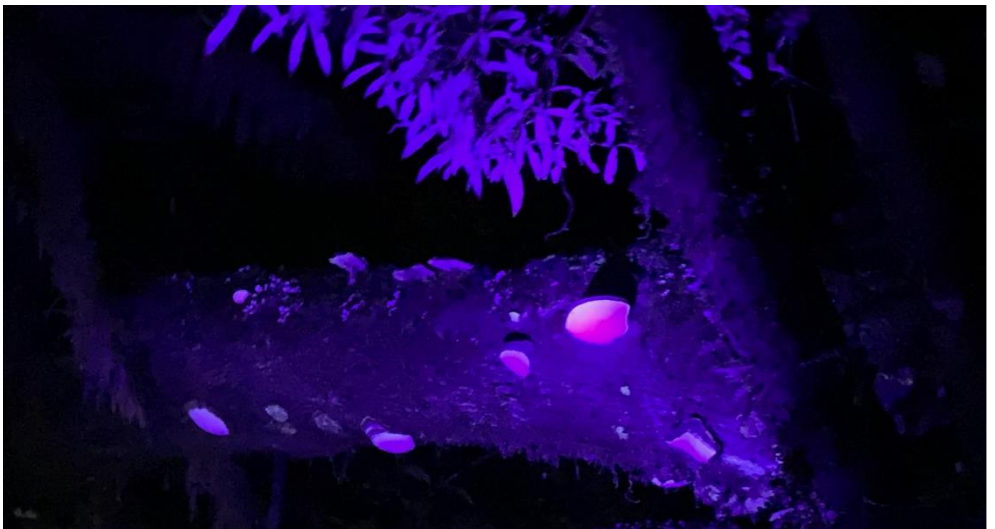
photo by Mike Webb





My pack's too heavy

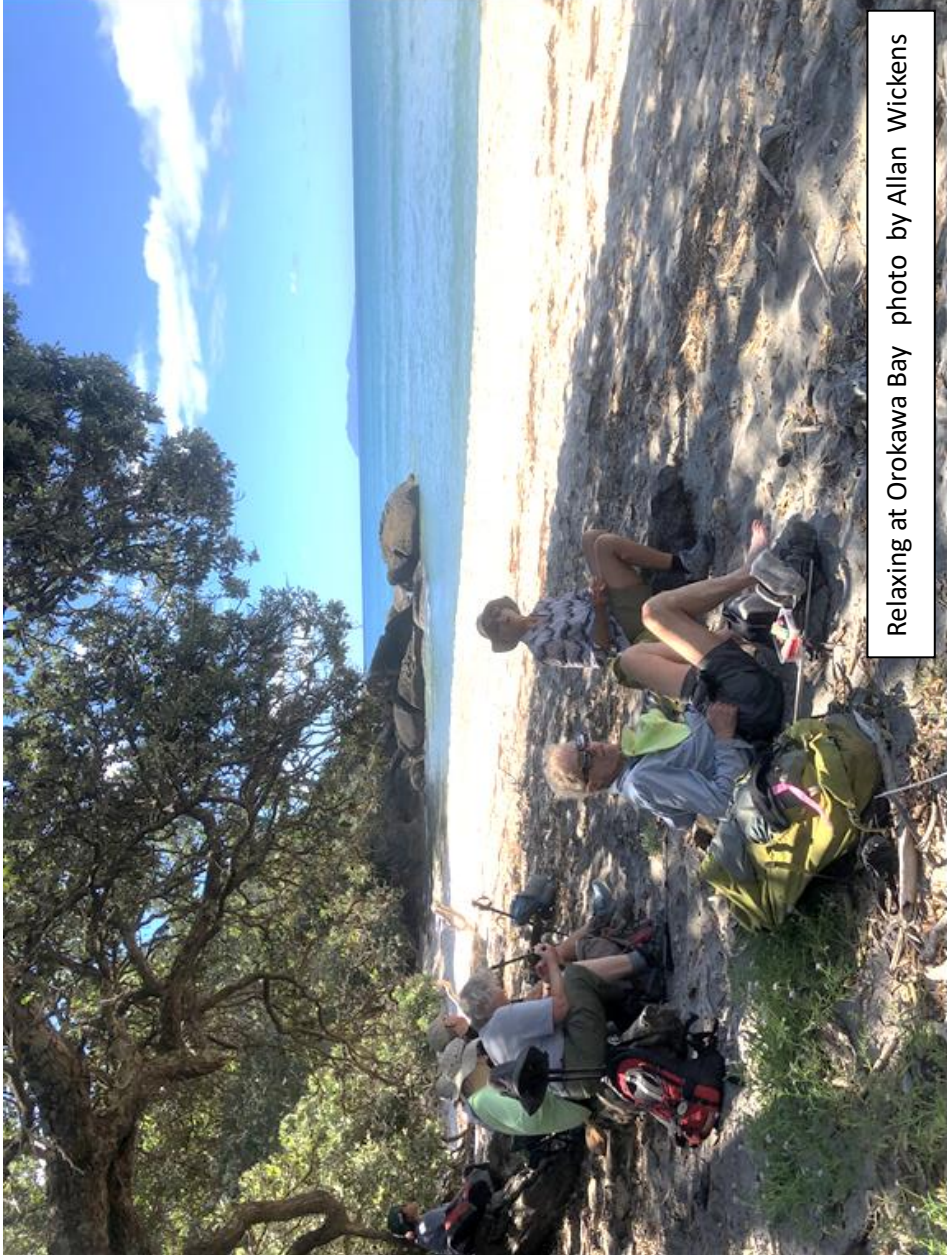
photo by Dianne June



Glowing fungi in north Pureora forest

photo by Helen Kuck

Note: It is now time to look out for the wonderful fungi we have in our forests (see trip 3124 on May 19th). There are many fungi that glow at night so perhaps we should consider doing some night walking sometime. This picture was taken using a UV light. Do you have a torch that would help you take such an amazing picture?



Relaxing at Orokawa Bay photo by Allan Wickens



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