



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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

April 2019



On the Kaimanawa tops photo by John McArthur

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

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Free to members

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

BULLETIN No 804

April 2019

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President: Selwyn June **Secretary:** Judith Bogle **Treasurer:** Guy Domett
Members: John McArthur (VP tramp) Mary Reed (VP Ski) Stephen Phillips
Allan Wickens Russell King Stacey Thompson Peter Lye Doug Pagel
Mike Nightingale minean@xtra.co.nz 8562394

Tramping Subcommittee

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Waikato Tramping Club account: 03 1555 0091625 02 (& include the trip number)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 1st May

Last year a group of club members headed to Peru for some magical walking. John McArthur will present a collection of photos from the team. Photos will cover the 13 days trekking in Huayhuash and climbing Mt. Ischina 5530m,

This will be a most interesting evening of South American scenery.

Note the 7.30pm start time for our meeting

Venue: St Stephens Church Hall (corner of Ohaupo Road and Mahoe Street).

Time: Doors open at 7.00pm.

Cost: \$2

Trip Planning meeting: On April 17th in the St Stephen's Church Hall, starting at 7.30pm. (Doors open 7.00). This is your chance to put your ideas forward for the next six months - July through to December. Get your best ideas together for some winter and spring trips, tramping, cycling, kayaking - whatever.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2019

2821	14 Apr	E/M	Maungatautari traverse	Doug Pagel
	17 Apr		Trip Planning	Allan Wickens
2822	19-22 Apr		Taranaki circuit	Damon Crawford
2823	23-28 Apr	E/M	Great Barrier Is.	Lois Rowell
2824	28 Apr	E	Cycle –Velodrome to Karapiro	David Cumming
	1st May		CLUB NIGHT	Stephen Prendergast
2825	4/5 May		Explore Rotorua walks	Club captain
2826	12 May	M	Waiorongomai - Te Aroha peak	John Wilson
2827	18/19 May	E/M	Leitches Clearing	Mike Peck
2828	26 May	E/M	Hiwiroa	John Davies
2829	1-3 June	M/F	Ruapehu(east)	Allan Wickens
2830	9 June	E/M	Karioi	Damon Crawford
2831	16 June		Waitomo area walks	Club captain
2832	22/23 Jun		Miranda Hot springs	Club captain
2833	29/30 Jun		Snowcraft	Allan Wickens

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.

Transport: Juniors will be charged 50% of the senior non-members' rate.

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.

DONT FORGET: You can book online from our website too

Bookings and cancellations for all trips must be made by the Monday night prior. Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip. *Please give your landline when making a booking.*

Departure Point: Trips depart from the river end of London Street. Cars can be parked, facing the road, in the McCaw Lewis Chapman car park. If in doubt contact your trip leader.

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

Day Trips: leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

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

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

Minimum equipment required:

Day Trips: A thermal layer (polypropylene, polyester etc or wool), an insulating layer of fleece (polartec etc) or wool and a water/wind-proof parka outer shell.

Shorts or longjohns/over-trousers in cool or wet weather. Torch and sunscreen.

Boots or strong shoes. Lunch, snacks and water bottle. First aid kit.

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

Trip Descriptions

Trip 2822

Taranaki circuit

19-21 Apr

Three day, two night tramp with spectacular views of Mt Taranaki and the surrounding countryside. The track passes through forest, alpine tussock fields, and the Ahukawakawa Swamp.

Friday: Drive to North Egmont Visitor Centre and walk to Holly hut via Kokowai and Holly hut track, 3-4 hours (7.5km). Due to a large slip part of Holly hut track is closed requiring a detour via Kokowai track.

Saturday: Holly hut to Pouakai Hut via Ahukawakawa and Pouakai track , 2-3hrs (4.5km). Side trips to Bells falls and Pouakai summit.

Sunday: Pouakai Hut to North Egmont Visitor Centre via Pouakai and Kaiarau track, 5-7hrs (13km).

Monday: The Whitecliffs Walkway could be a possibility before we drive home.

Leader: Damon Crawford **Ph:** 027 213 765 **Grade:** M/F

Transport : Senior member \$85-105 Senior Non-member \$90-110

Trip 2823 Great Barrier Island 23-28 Apr

I am planning a 5 or 6 day tramping trip to Great Barrier Island just after Easter, departing Tuesday 23rd April and returning on Sunday 28th April. This takes in ANZAC day 25th.

It is proposed to tent at least 4 nights with one night at Mt Heale Hut which is the closest hut to Mt Hobson. This hut needs to be booked. It is also a very popular hut so I would need to know numbers as soon as possible.

The walks would take in both coastal and inland tracks. The island has a rich history, excellent flora and fauna and great views.

The cheapest option for transport to the island is by ferry from down town Auckland. We will travel around the island by shuttle. Stopping at various campsites as we go.

If interested people could contact me as soon as possible I would appreciate it.

Leader: Lois Rowell **Ph:** 8565369 or 021 2881148 **Grade:** E/M

Transport : Private arrangements

Trip 2824 Cycling- Velodrome to Karapiro 28 Apr

This is a cycle trip on Te Awa, the Great New Zealand River Ride. We will meet at the velodrome (Avantidrome) at Hanlin Road, Cambridge, at 9:15am and cycle the section to Cambridge, through Leamington and then on to Lake Karapiro (15.2km). This trip is suitable for families. The roads within Cambridge are generally cycle friendly and most of this trip is on off road concrete path with a few gentle hills to deal with. The trip features views of farmland, the Waikato River and the section through to the Karapiro Rowing Course which follows the lake edge. On the return trip we will stop at a café for a coffee break.

Leader: David Cumming **Ph:** 8397850 **Grade:** E

Email: *david.cumming@xtra.co.nz*

Transport : Private arrangements.

Trip 2825 Explore Rotorua rambles 3 / 4 May

Having had successful trips to the Coromandel region during our "Explore Coromandel" week-ends, we now concentrate on seeing what the Rotorua area has to offer. Notable peaks to ascend are Mounts Ngongotaha (757 metres) and Rainbow Mountain (743 metres). Along with the many shorter walks available

we are also looking at doing a more challenging walk - the Mangarewa Track. This is a circuit of 9 kms taking about 5-6 hours and described as being for "experienced trampers only". Those up to the task may do this trip while others concentrate on other less arduous walks in the meantime. We will depart London Street at a slightly earlier time than normal as the day-light hours will be less at this time of year. On Saturday night we will stay in budget accommodation in Rotorua.

Leader: Allan Wickens **Email:** *allanwickens@hotmail.com* **Grade:** E/M

Transport : Senior member \$45-50 Senior Non-member \$50-60

Accommodation: please sign on early so we can book suitable accommodation.

Trip 2826 **Waiorongomai- Te Aroha Peak** **12 May**

This is a medium trip, but we do start with a climb of Mt Te Aroha from the Domain. Widespread views can be had from the summit on a clear day, from Mayor Island and the east coast to the Waikato and Firth of Thames. On a really clear day Ruapehu is visible. We then drop down to the east and pick up the track leading down through Waiorongomai Valley, with historic mining relics adding interest. The weather will be getting cooler so don't forget warm clothes and parka.

Leader: John Wilson **Ph:** 8536494 **Grade:** M

Transport : Senior member \$20-30 Senior Non-member \$25-35

Trip 2827 **Leitches Clearing** **18/19 May**

The trip to Leitches Clearing is a E/M trip going via the Mahoenui Track at the end of Gribbon Rd. Permission has been granted from the owners to cross private land to the start of the track. Walking distance is 22km return. We'll leave Hamilton mid morning and have an early lunch at Piopio or wherever someone knows of a good cafe. We can stay at Leitches Hut which requires a standard backcountry hut ticket (\$5.00) or tent somewhere on the clearing.

Leader: Mike Peck **Ph:** 021369256 **Grade:** E/M

Email: *Mikeypeck@yahoo.com*

Transport : Senior member \$45-55 Senior Non-member \$50-60

Trip 2828 **Hiwiroa** **26 May**

This track leaves the Rotorua-Tirau road in the Mamaku Forest Park and follows the old road that used to lead into the sawmill that was here until the 1940s. After about 15 mins you enter a clearing and can see remnants of the old mill. The track continues, following an old tramline, making easy walking through regenerating scrub, small clearings, past a second mill site and on to the Waiomou stream. Having crossed the stream we climb steeply through some beautiful stands of ancient rimu. Our destination is a helipad close to the summit and where great views of Mt Ruapehu and Ngaruahoe can be had on a fine day. We follow the same route back to our bus.

Leader: John Davies

Ph: 8237388

Grade: E/M

Transport : Senior member \$25-30

Senior Non-member \$30-35

Trip 2829

Eastern Ruapehu

1-3 Jun

For this long week-end trip we will be based at Whangaehu Hut (New Zealand Alpine Club) near the Tukino ski-field. To access this hut we will either utilise 4WD's via a locked gate directly to the hut (situated at 2080 metres) or walk the last 1.5 kms from the gate to the hut.

Initially we will drive down to Turangi Friday night and stay at Extreme Backpackers. On Saturday we drive (hopefully) all the way to the hut

For the rest of the week-end we will look at climbing up onto the eastern slopes and walking in the area. For those who wish to go high, they will have to have experience with crampons and ice axe, from our basic snowcraft course. There may also be room to accommodate people who wish to simply walk in the area. Please note: This trip will have limited numbers. The hut holds 12 people in total and there is room to camp nearby. We are unable to book this hut but can contact the NZAC who will factor in our group. As there will probably be early snow we need to make allowance for our camping situation. If we utilise 4WD's we are dependent on getting people to drive for us. This trip will be heavily weather dependent. Snowcraft skills may be required.

Leader: Allan Wickens **Email:** allanwickens@hotmail.com **Grade:** M/F

Bookings: email preferred, or via the website please.

Transport: These will be higher if a 4WD is used

Senior member \$65-85

Senior Non-member \$70-90

Accommodation: Hut is \$20/person/night. There will also be a backpacker cost for Friday night.

Trip 2830

Karioi

9 Jun

We will be starting this track at Te Toto Gorge and making our way along the Mt Karioi Track, 3 - 3.5 hours one way, to the summit. This is a steep but scenic track on the western side that winds its way along a ridge. there are some ladders and chains to negotiate the steep rocky sections. once on top of the ridge there is a short side track leading to a lookout with good views across Raglan Harbour. Back on the main track it is another hour to the Karioi summit (756 m) along an undulating ridge through wind sculpted vegetation. We plan to return the same way.

Another alternative is the Wairake Track, 2-3 hours one way on the eastern side. It is a shorter track to the summit and crosses farmland.

Leader: Damon Crawford

Ph: 027 213 765

Grade: E/M

Transport : Senior member \$25-30

Senior Non-member \$30-35

Waikato Ski Club

Summer stays

For purposes of booking, 'summer time' is up until about Queens Birthday weekend. This means you can still get a good deal for your stay at the Hut – our lodge-style accommodation on Mt. Ruapehu. It is a great base for going tramping in the Ruapehu area, day walks to Tama Lakes or the Waterfalls or Silica rapids. Or do the Tongariro crossing, or up to crater lake. You could also use it before and after longer tramps such as around the mountain, or the northern circuit, or for other trips round the central plateau, or just a place to relax and catch up with family. How about taking the kids for a few days in the holidays? It is a great place at this time of year to enjoy the mountain environment and perhaps even take some friends or colleagues up to comfortable quarters. Our members' rates for summer (valid for tramping and skiing members) are \$15 for a child and \$25 for adult, with good non members rates for \$30 for adult or \$21 for a child. Or book the Hut for a weekend for a family, social or work group - \$600 for the whole lodge. You do need to book beforehand, and open and close the Hut – i.e. putting on electricity water –but this is straight forward and there is an easily followed list to do this. Contact waikatoski@gmail.com to make bookings. Note during this time you can't do online bookings - they have to go through the booking officer.

Doing your part?

The ski section is keen to more interested persons involved in the running of the Hut and ski section. Mary has stepped down from being the Vice-President of the ski section and a replacement is needed. We welcome members to come on the ski section committee to help with the marketing, maintenance, and running of the building and ski section. Many hands make light work and it is sociable too. Please email waikatoski@gmail.com if you are interested.

Editorial

My sincere apologies to John McArthur – he was the photographer of the March bulletin cover picture.

Another successful year of club operations has gone by and the AGM successfully concluded. With a few juggles of position holders and a bit of new blood entering the committee group we are ready for the next year. The committee is not 'the club' – you are. So it is good to see that you are prepared to participate in organising all manner of activities for us to undertake but also be the participant in those activities and supporting the leaders. With many people doing a little bit it becomes an enjoyable group to belong to. Why not consider putting your name forward to lead a trip this year? Have a word to the club captain and see which trip would suit you to lead and what you need to find out about the destination and leadership. It's amazing what you can learn and skills

you develop along the way. This may include historical notes about your chosen area, particular points of interest, previous club members' experiences in the area, people management, first aid, gear, navigation, food, reading weather maps, travel times to, across and from your trip destination, etc etc. I could list many more points but you've got the idea by now. Put your hand up and try something this year that you've never done before.

And a new 'skill' I've just learnt today – how to make the pictures black and white before the bulletin goes to the printers. At last! The trip statistics may not be as sharp as in colour but I hope you can read them OK.

Presidents' Blog

At last Dianne and I have done a 5 day tramp in the South Island. The Andrews and Poulter valleys and the Binzer Saddle in Arthurs Pass National Park were the scene of our travails and walking, with a bonus day relaxing in Arthurs Pass. Tall mountains, a shingle river bed so wide that the river had disappeared underground, beech forest, the sweet smell of honeydew, shingle screes, bellbirds, kiwi foot prints, sandflies (!) and a tight knit group of six are the main memories of the week. We also enjoyed a night in the comfortable Christchurch Tramping Club hut set among beech forest in Arthurs Pass township (and issued an invitation to stay at our hut). After the group dispersed we did a tiki tour through Reefton, the Grey Valley, St Arnaud and Nelson. You see some funny things, like the coal train stopped at Ikamatua while the driver crossed the road to buy his lunch, and the very grumpy publican at the famous Blackball Hilton Hotel. You wonder how he is going to cope with the hordes of visitors to the Croesus Track end of the Paparoa/Pike River Track! Then there was a sign at Arthurs Pass warning campers to be wary of kea who liked to wreck tents, day or night. Yes, it's another world down there, so look out for next year's series of trips. Better still, organise one to the place you've always wanted to see.

Selwyn June

Trip reports

Trip 2803A

Kaimanawa trip

26-28 Jan

Soon after setting off along the Kaimanawa southern access track the clouds cleared and we could see Ruapehu looming over our shoulder for the rest of the morning until we headed north off-track after lunch. We picked a spur and climbed over before descending down to a tussocky flat pockmarked with deep pools of rusty water. Then it was up and onto the range. Upon reaching Patutu the party split with the peak-baggers going up and over while the others (the majority!) sidled around to meet up by some hoof prints and horse poo. Camp was made a little farther along the ridge beside a little trickle of a stream.

The next morning the wind was up and the clouds were back. By the time we reached the jagged pinnacles we could see from camp, conditions could best be

described as miserable. Made a wind-assisted ascent of Karikaringa just before visibility dropped to almost nothing. Briefly found ourselves going down the wrong ridgeline but a navigation committee convened and quickly saw us right again. The afternoon's weather was much more pleasant and spirits were lifted further by barista-made coffee at lunchtime. Glorious sunshine meant fantastic views of Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and the Kaimanawa ranges from Motutere before we left the tops for the valley. Despite the best efforts of a conspiracy of windfall and bush lawyer, we were soon cooling off in the river. The group gathered in a small clearing for much of the evening – we spied a few other trampers heading downriver too.



On the tops of the Kaimanawas

Photo by Callum McDougal

Apparently a rowdy kiwi was marching up and down the river by our campsite for much of the night (I managed to sleep right through). Didn't stop us from keeping to our strict 8am departure time, though. We soon caught up with the party we saw the night before: a group from the Hamilton Tramping Club. Stopped for a chat before carrying on along the river to the foot of the Umukarikari range and track that would take us up to it.

We soon found ourselves on top of Urchin, where we were treated to a little show when 3 mountain bikers launched themselves down the mountain.

We followed in their dust (David managing to catch up with them!) along a nicely-benched track that found us delivered to the carpark where John and Jean

were waiting for us



Laid back on the Kaimanawas

Photo by Callum McDougal

Group made up of Mike Peck & John Davies (co leaders), Callum McDougal (script), Paul Quinn, John McArthur, Jo Walker, Dale Hollands, Max Greer, John Aarts, David Totman.

Trip 2811

Exploring the Cobb river

24 Feb-1 Mar

Day 1: There were 7 of us who left Nelson on Sunday morning via shuttle to the Cobb Valley road end. We called into Trilobite hut which was nearby, to be greeted by the local wekas. By the sprinkling of snow on the hill tops it felt like time to put some warmer gear on and have lunch before heading to Fenella hut. Then we made our way up the Cobb Valley alongside the river, passing Chaffey and Cobb huts. After a 4.5 hour 13km walk in fine weather of which the last 30 minutes was a bit of a climb we arrived at our destination Fenella hut where we stayed the night. There were no other trampers in the hut. (Jocelyn Widmer)

Day 2: We woke to find frost on the ground surrounding the hut, promise of a good day ahead. First side trip was a quick walk to view the swimming hole about 300 m from the hut, would be a great spot later in the day, then after picking up our packs we set off for Cobb Hut. Again we left our packs and took a 2 hour side trip around Cobb Lake. We lunched at the hut then continued on to Trilobite Hut enjoying a bracing swim in the Cobb on our way.

All 3 Huts in this section were in good condition with easy to light stoves and plenty of firewood. (Sharon Payne)

Day 3: After a night at Trilobite Hut we set off early for Balloon Hut. Shortly after entering the bush we stopped look at Mython Hut - a small cute hut that has seen many visitors and trampers through the years. A young German couple who had stayed the night were brewing lovely smelling coffee for breakfast. We continued on our gradual steep walk through beautiful bush. Had a cool off break. Once out of the bush from here on was attractive tussock country. We continued to climb 'til reaching Peel Ridge which had wonderful views of the valley below. After lunching at Peel Lake we walked along the ridge then gradually dropped down to Balloon hut through waist high tussock ending another perfect day.



Asbestos Cottage

Photo by Lois Rowell

Day 4: We set off early around 8am from Balloon hut. It was easy walking down through the dry golden tussock tableland and beech trees. A quick detour was made to inspect a small cave system. By 10am we were at Salisbury Lodge, a 22 bunker. The weather was overcast so climbing for views was off the cards. It was decided that a visit to Asbestos Cottage would be a good alternative. With lunch, water and jackets in our daypacks we set off. I had heard the stories about Henry and Annie Chaffey as my husband was born and brought up in Takaka so I was keen to take a look at their humble abode.

David was in the front setting a nice steady pace. We passed a couple of Rock Shelters built into the hillside where trampers could spend the night. Lunch was eaten beside one of the swing bridges along the way enabling us to fill water bottles. Colin boiled up his daily brew of tea for those of us tea drinkers. Although there were no major hills it was a longish walk through the beech forest. The 2-roomed hut was tiny and dark. The living room was delightfully set out with lounge chairs from that era and a photo of the couple on the wall. There was lots of information about the life of Henry and Annie Chaffey which Jocelyn kindly read out. Artifacts and household utensils were displayed on the walls. All too soon we were back on the return journey. About half an hour from Salisbury Lodge the rain set in. Walking through the wet waist high tussock grass was a shock with all of us arriving back with wet shorts and boots. We had walked approximately 25 km that day. A good effort all round.

Day 5: After late-afternoon and evening rain the previous day, we woke to a beautiful fine morning and blue skies over the Gordon Pyramids area. With the blessing of our Trip Leader, three of us were keen to walk to Flora Hut via Gordon Pyramids. Two of us had PLB's, so Colin was OK for Merlyn, Jocelyn and I, to go. The others did a day trip to the Pyramids and stay another night at Salisbury Lodge. We set off at 9am from the Lodge and soon began our ascent to Gordon Pyramids, which we reached within 2hrs. Up and along the open tops we had wonderful views around the surrounding area. After a short stop at the Pyramids we forged on towards Horseshoe Basin. After a few ascents and descents, we stopped at Horseshoe Basin for lunch. Had good views of Mt Arthur. Within 30min after lunch we ascended to the track junction to Mt Arthur. We opted not to climb Mt Arthur. From this track junction it was an hour, mostly downhill, to Mt Arthur Hut. Wonderful views across to the ocean. We checked out Mt Arthur Hut, but due to the unknown water supply (lack of rain in the area for several weeks), we had earlier decided we would stay the night at Flora Hut. So, it was another hour and a bit to Flora Hut. The last section descending to the Hut was quite tiring as track was quite rooted. We reached Flora Hut around 3pm, so it was a 6hr day. Flora Hut had two separate bunk rooms with 6 beds and own wood fire, which we used. With Friday being our last day and not being picked up till 3pm, we had a nice sleep in. (Les Warren)

Trip 2817

Mokaihaha (Mamaku)

17 Mar

A very low key tramping day in the Rotorua locale led by Doug Pagel. Our first tramp was the ascent of Mt Ngongotaha (757 metres) via the Jubilee track. A very pleasant walk with a few options of an easy casual loop or a good physically exerting climb directly up to the summit (about 40 minutes). Unfortunately the summit gives no view over the Rotorua area, which would otherwise be spectacular. However, the bush is pleasant with birdsong and lovely flora and fauna.



A derelict hut

photo by Isla Trapski

At first I thought I was hearing a kokako but have since come to the conclusion it was perhaps a tui mimicking the tunes. Missing was the lovely deep melodic sounds that only a kokako can give. A lovely warm and sunny break at the summit gave time for late morning tea or an early lunch before heading down for

our next adventure. On our return, an area of interest was a 40m rata tree on the loop track.

Our next visit took us through and beyond the Mamaku village just north of Rotorua. Previously a timber milling town, it was evident that this was once a thriving community with signs that this is still the case but perhaps for different reasons. The surrounding farms appear to be sheep and dairy.

Our destination took us down a dusty gravel road for approximately 10 kms to the Mokaihaha track, with the intention of finding Lake Rotokakoha. This is known as the Mokaihaha Ecological Area and is the last remaining block of native forest in the Mamaku region. It was also an area historically used by Maori for access through to the Waikato region.

A very pretty walk through via an easy track, we passed a very early derelict hut (perhaps used also by hunters) but not so inviting in its current state.

Travelling through a delightful forest of podocarps of miro, rimu and matai made for a very pleasant walk. Unfortunately Lake Rotokakoha was not quite reached. Continuing on, to approximately 1 hour in, it was decided, due to time factors, to turn back. After a quick stop at Tirau for the usual ice-cream, our return to Hamilton was around 5pm. A very pleasant relaxing day with pleasant company. Jacquie D, Marianna L, David C, Isla T (report author) Doug P (leader), Adrianna B, Sheryl our driver, Amanda, , Jacob, Rizal, Neville, Jeanette, Fiona, Kristie, Rosie P and Rosie McG.

Trip 2818 Pirongia (Bell/Mahaukura tracks) 23/24 Mar

Someone from the tramping club once told me “There are no easy tracks on Mt. Pirongia...” I should rephrase that, everyone from the tramping club has told me this. I now know what they mean. This was one of those “Are we there yet?” trips.

Day 1 started foggy, and we drove cars to the start of the Bell Track, at the Kaniwhaniwha Carpark, on Limeworks Loop Road. We numbered six, with Allan W leading, followed by Waveney, Theresa, Bree, Dave and Debbie. Gaiters on 8.45 a.m. The track actually starts as the Nikau Walk and in days gone by, this part of the track was pretty much farmland, following the stream for a couple of kilometres towards the Kaniwhaniwha Campsite. Volunteer planting of the stream edge that Dave and Debbie helped with at one stage many years back has now grown to quite a sheltered walk and this has now mostly hidden the stream, although you still hear it bubbling away.

The fog cleared, the going was easy and fast and once we reached the start of the Bell Track, we still followed an easy gradient beside the stream for another couple of k's. It was about this point that Allan said “We'll be there in about seven hours”. At about six kms in, we reached a good sized swing bridge where there was a short side track (10-15 minutes return) to NZ's tallest recorded native tree – a Kahikatea standing 66.5 metres tall.



Checking out the swing bridge

photo by Dave White

Very much worth a look as the Kahikatea had been flowering and dropping pretty pink berries on the track.

Crossing the swing bridge, we left the Blue Bill Stream behind us and had a reasonably steep climb up on to a gently rising track, leaving some very friendly fantails behind us. This was a long haul before we finally started to make some elevation heading up to The Cone. For the most part, the track was dry to this point, although there were a number of damp areas to avoid.

Those damp areas than became “damper” and soon most of us had at least one brown leg to the knee. Amazing after so long without rain down here on the flats. The steep climb to The Cone (953m) provided some spectacular views for 360 degrees. Kawhia, Aotea, bits of Raglan Harbours and Mt. Karioi to the West, and the Hakaramatas through to Maungatautari and Kakepuku to the North and South. The day was starting to drag by this point and there were some low/empty water bottles. With a descent and climb to Pahautea Hut still ahead of us, talk turned to whether there would be water at the hut. With so little water falling down in Hamilton, we were unsure whether the catchment at the top of Pirongia was sufficient to keep up with the trampers going through there.



Checking out the swing bridge

photo by Dave White

With no streams to collect from, having no water at the end of the day could become an issue with cooking and another days tramping ahead.

We were relieved to arrive at the hut to find plenty of water but also what seemed like 40 kids overflowing the “resort”. We had come prepared with tents so

grabbed some of the last camping spots. Gaiters off 6.15 p.m. 19-20 k's and 9 ½ hours on the track. 7 hours Allan? You are such a tease...

Day two started overcast and we were in the cloud. Gaiters on 8.15 a.m. A quick trip through to the lookout tower at the peak of Mt. Pirongia (959m) and the cloud was starting to disperse with intermittent views. The aim today to go down the Mahaukura Track coming out on Grey Road. About all you can say about this track is "steep and knarly". It was designed for people with long arms and legs, of which we (apart from Allan) were not so well endowed.

I must at this point note that we were hearing much more birdlife throughout the day than I can recall on other trips up the mountain. Lots of song. Tui, Bellbirds and many other smaller varieties. We also heard some single notes that we were pretty sure were Kokako. The baiting seems to be doing its job. Well done to all those involved.

The trip continued...down, down, up, down, down, up, down down down... Very muggy and hot. Most of us were dripping. After so much steep descent, it was a relief to get patches of less steep terrain, and then finally the bottom section where the path opens up and footing less treacherous. "Are we there yet?" Nearly.

We arrived at the Forest park Lodge carpark at 2.15 p.m. for gaiters off. 9.5k's in just over 6 hours. The knees and ankles were grateful to stop. Allan had left his vehicle there early on Saturday and was able to drive us back to Te Pahu and our vehicles.

A very rewarding view of Mt. Pirongia and I can now say that I have done it the long (and hard) way.

Thank you Allan for your leadership and the team for making this a most enjoyable weekend.



**Waikato Tramping Club
and
Waikato Ski Club**

Have a look at the club facebook site for more pictures and comments.

FITNESS WALK / FUN / FLAGSTAFF

Every Tuesday morning we meet at Flagstaff Shopping Centre ready for a 7.30 start. We head north into the new subdivisions using the extensive pathways along the gully systems. Pace is fast but not so fast that you can't discuss the week's events. One hour later we're back near the start and toilets. If you need to get away, now's your chance. Usually we walk for another hour and return to the carpark by 9.30am. No need to book, just turn up, but if it's your first time please phone Colin on 849 4420 the night before so we know you are coming.

From the committee table:

New Members: Rosie Paltridge, Steve Cranefield, Anita Shannon, David Meadows. Welcome to you all.

Resignations: Julie Sperry, Sarah Smylie, Denise Fleming, Marilyn & Peter Bird.

Membership: We have 182 tramping members. 13 Members have not yet paid their subscriptions so won't be receiving any bulletins unless they pay.

Condolences: The committee and club members extend their heartfelt condolences to Life Member Annette Kidd (formerly King) on the loss of her husband Malcolm on April 5th in Tauranga. Malcolm was Annette's quiet stalwart in the background of tramping club functions and we shall miss his cheery smile whenever we got together.

Misplaced: Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). The missing beacon has been 'found' – in the possession of a diligent club member who didn't return it to the 'pool' of equipment held by the club gear 'custodian'. All good.

From the tramping VP: Carbon Offsetting of WTC Tramping Trips; In 2018 the WTC drove approximately 14,340 km to get to and from our tramping trips (12,750 km in 2017), not including the South Island trips. This use of buses, cars and minibuses consumed approximately 1650 litres of fuel and generated 4.48 tonnes of CO₂ Greenhouse gas emissions (4.13 tonnes in 2017). The NZ Emission Trading Scheme obliges the petrol companies to surrender Carbon Units to the tune of 83% of their products' emissions in 2018 so we have a residual responsibility for 0.75 tonnes of emissions. (In 2017 petrol companies covered 67% of emissions from their fuels sold, and WTC had a residual of 1.375 tonne.) The 2018 emissions of 0.75 tonnes has been cancelled (off-set) by The Carbon Shop at a cost of \$21.40 donated by John McArthur. (2017 emissions of 1.375 tonnes was previously off-set at a cost of \$38.56).

From the General committee: What is a Service Award?

WTC Service Award:

An award for outstanding service to the Club; to recognise contributions such as leadership, serving on committees, tramping or skiing prowess, long-standing active membership, implementing a project, helping with Waikato Hut maintenance and representing the Club on external bodies

Service Award for Alan Grant

Alan joined the club in 2006 or thereabouts, came onto the WTC committee in 2013 and became the Transport Officer the following year, a position he held until recently, always ensuring that transport arrangements worked well for our many trips.

Alan's main impact on the Club started when he facilitated the Strategic Planning project of 2013. Four focus group meetings with members were held, as well as meetings with the Hut Committee and other groups. This was a broad review which looked at the purpose and aims of the club, membership participation, type of trip offered, how to recruit more members and market the club better, as well as the difficulties being encountered in maintaining Waikato Hut.

This led on to his contribution, through many discussions and meetings, to developing a new Club structure with the division into ski and tramping sections under the oversight of a general committee. Alan then became the inaugural President under this new structure and led the club in this role for the mandatory three years from 2014 to 2017, followed by a year as Past President. He was very effective in ensuring the ski and tramping committees worked both separately and together in the interests of all members. His advice and oversight on financial, website and promotional matters has always been valuable for both committees. Updating the club's constitution was necessary as a result of the restructuring. This was a tour de force for Alan requiring a lot of detailed wording changes and firm chairmanship at a famous AGM.

Week-long summer tramps in the South Island and long weekend tramps in the North Island have been Alan's main tramping activity, and he has been the leader of a number of epic trips. More recently he took to helicopter rides as a quick way out of the bush! We look forward to many more trips with Alan.

Selwyn June, President

..... and Alan's reply: Hi tramping friends, Just a brief email to say thank you very much for the Outstanding Service award you gave me at last Wednesday's AGM. It was very nice to have my input over the last few years formally recognized. And equally good to see our Club in such good heart with the large numbers present and the varied trip program ahead. Congratulations to you all too.

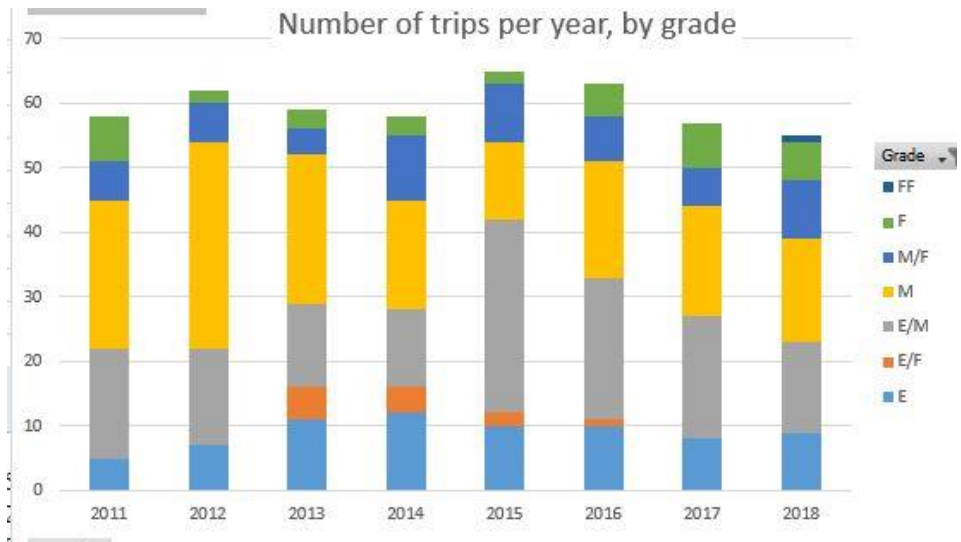
I also apologize for being rude and asking Selwyn not to read out the citation behind the award, but both he and John Mc had already acknowledged me in both their AGM reports, and I was getting a bit embarrassed. I'm happy for it to appear in a future Bulletin if appropriate.

I look forward to many more years with the Club. I'm driving for Ashley on 9 June, and after walking the Tongariro Crossing two weeks ago, I am regaining my mojo to join longer and then overnight WTC trips again soon. Rose and I just have a bit of travelling to do in May, July and Sept, so around those absences I look forward to seeing you all on some trips and at future club nights

From the tramping captain: Trip statistics up to and including 2018. These figures were presented at the AGM but here they are in print for you.

"People Days" are the number of people out on the track for a day so 10 people tramping for a Sunday is 10 People Days, but 10 people on a two day tramp is 20

Total number of trips per year remains above one per week. The distribution by fitness grade has been an even spread.



From the editor: A **FREE GIFT** for you. Kauri Dieback Boot Bag. I have a few more boot bags left for club members to own. I haven't had any feedback about how to make your one easily distinguishable from your fellow trampers' one but have had a few comments on how useful they are. Don't forget to contact the Waikato Regional Council (the suppliers of said bags) with your feedback.

Snippets from here 'n there....

- **Wanted for free:** Many thanks to the 2 club members who donated their older packs for use by volunteers helping the Pirongia Restoration Society with their pest control operation on Pirongia and in Pureora. We now have 4 packs available for use by those who wish to help but don't have a pack
- **Kokako on Pirongia.** It has been confirmed that 10 chicks have successfully fledged this season from the 4 pairs (and 6 nests) in the pest controlled area on Mt. Pirongia. This is an average of 2.5 chicks per pair, which is the highest productivity for kokako pairs across all the sites that the contractor is monitoring of a similar nature (re-establishing populations). There is still one nest active on the Mahaukura track so with any luck the productivity ratio will go up a little once fledging occurs there. Thanks to everyone who has been monitoring nests

over these weeks. It has been a pretty successful season and everyone has played an important part in that.

➤ **Pouakai tarns damage.** New Plymouth i-SITE Visitor Centre has posted on its Facebook page to say the area around the tarns was really fragile and urged people to stay on the boardwalk. This comes after DoC installed a boardwalk to avoid trampling of the wetland vegetation but many picture-snapping trampers were now walking beyond the boardwalk, pitching tents, or swimming in the ankle deep tarns until the right conditions emerged to take the photograph. The Pouakai walking circuit is getting so much use that a new car park has been built at the Mangorei Rd entrance, and a shuttle bus service introduced to take visitors up to the North Egmont visitor centre from Egmont Village.

➤ **Stepping up to longer trips.** Would you like to progress to weekend and longer tramps but feel you need advice on what is required to feel safe and comfortable? This advice could be about footwear, clothing, packs and other gear, or the kind of food or how to pack a light pack, or even the level of fitness preparation required. The club has appointed 'new trumper mentors' to give you advice. We have Judith Bogle (ph 07 824 0825), John McArthur (ph 856 4394) and Ashley Hoskin (ph 07 870 4570). Feel free to give them a call. The designated trip leaders can also help you.

➤ **Myrtle rust update in the Waikato** - There are 121 sites/properties in the Waikato region with confirmed infection. Most of these are in Otorohanga and the Taupo district.

➤ **Updates on the kauri dieback work as of March 18th:**

- Mangakino Pack Track: Mitigation works on the Mangakino Pack Track are now complete, final engineer inspection to be scheduled.
- Lindemann Loop Track and Dickey Flat Track: Mitigation works are progressing, with box steps currently under construction along the Lindemann Loop Track and boardwalks on Dickey Flat. Works are expected to be complete by April 3.
- Wharawhara Tramway and Upper Waitawheta Tracks: Track set outs are now complete and the tracks will be temporarily closed for approximately a week while mitigation work is undertaken, from Wednesday 13th March onwards.
- Waiorongomai Track, Waipapa Track, Lindemann to Cashmore Track: Hakaramita Summit Track and Wharawhara Road through to Waitawheta Hut and back to Waitengaue Track. Track set outs are complete, with mitigation work to commence in the coming weeks.

➤ **Help Wanted in the Kaimais.** Te Whare Okioki Hut in the southern Kaimai is nearing completion. Within the next few weeks the roof will be on and it will offer basic shelter for everyone working on or around the hut. The Kaimai Ridgeway Trust (KRT) has asked the club to help clear tracks leading to the hut,

particularly the section of track from the Kaimai Summit through to the Leyland O'Brien Tramway area. This hut will be great for our trips into the area. From Roger Montgomerie of KRT: "The advantage as I see it is that is relatively easy country compared to the Te Rereatukahia North zone that you have helped clear previously. Certainly it is much more accessible from Hamilton (about 1 hour 10 minutes) and we can hopefully arrange safe parking for vehicles nearby. The Hurunui area is good for overnight camping with a stream nearby. We would only be looking at small groups of 4 or 5 each time".



Progress on the new hut - contact John McArthur if you'd like to help.

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

✓ **Illegal operators feel the sting.** DoC's compliance focus has increased for a second year running with officers targeting illegal operators at key tourist sites this summer. This includes those operating without a concession, and those flouting the terms of an existing concession. Targeted large scale operations have been run at five high volume tourist sites, with a further two planned before the end of summer. During just one of these operations DOC rangers checked 193 vehicles – 146 were found to be compliant, 40 in breach of their concession in some way, and 7 were operating without a concession. In addition to targeted operations, warranted staff around the country are also undertaking compliance work. For example, local rangers found a crew filming without a concession in

Tongariro National Park. The crew had also acted illegally by taking their vehicle off road, and are liable to face prosecution. Overall the percentage of operators complying with the conditions of their concession has been pleasingly high; and the majority of illegal operators have since applied for the appropriate concession.

✓ Damian Coutts is the new **Operations Director for the Central North Island**. Damian has spent the last three and a half years running a regional tourism organisation; and has previously held roles in DoC as Operations Director for the Central and Lower North Island regions. If you are in the Central North Island and have an important issue to discuss contact him on dcoutts@doc.govt.nz

✓ March was **Who awareness month**. DoC would like to give a shout out to the concessionaire who has helped build a who protection programme on the Tongariro river. Over 10 years ago the Tongariro River Rafting, along with other business owners, established the Blue Duck Charitable Trust to manage 800 traps on 42km of the river. There are now 30 pairs of birds to be seen. Guests on their rafting and fishing trips help to clear traps and are very likely to see who in the wild while they paddle the river. There is even a dedicated Blue Duck rafting trip, with proceeds going directly towards conservation efforts. Have a look at their website for more information.

✓ **Tahr control work** is resuming. There are an estimated 35,000 animals on conservation land – way above the 10,000 set out in the control plan.

✓ Responsible **drone use** featured in the Summer Visitor Campaign. The key message for visitors was to, ‘arrange a permit before you visit if you want to fly a drone over conservation land or near marine mammals.

✓ **Aircraft landings at Ngapunatoru plateau**. DoC has been trying to balance the increased demand for more tourist flights with the impact on conservation and the environment, but we accept we got it wrong with the Ngapunatoru Plateau. A report from the Ombudsman last year found that we should not have initiated a trial to increase the number of landings on the Plateau and that we need to work within the limits set by the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.

Email your contributions to the editor by **Wednesday, May 3rd**.

Wise dinner table sayings:

You have 2 ears and 1 mouth – use them in the same ratio.

What you say is repeating what you know. What you hear is learning something new.

Pictures from the river crossing course. Story next month.



It's only ankle deep.....

Photo by Rizal Razak



Maybe it's a bit deeper.....

Photo by Rizal Razak



Er... perhaps a bit deeper. Can I help?

photo by Rizal Razak



Oh poof – let's go the whole hog

photo by Rizal Razak



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