



# THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

**WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB INC.** July 2019

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • [www.wtc.org.nz](http://www.wtc.org.nz)



Snowcraft action photo by Kim Toxward

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc  
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Free to members  
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Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 807

July 2019

### General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

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

### Tramping Subcommittee

**Tramping email:** [waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com](mailto:waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com)  
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**Treasurer:** Guy Domett    [guydomett@gmail.com](mailto:guydomett@gmail.com)    0272483008  
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**Club Captain:** Allan Wickens    [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com)    0279509546  
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Selwyn June    [selwynjune@xtra.co.nz](mailto:selwynjune@xtra.co.nz)    8433066

### Ski Subcommittee

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**Bulletin:** Lesley Kuggeleijn    [lesley.kugg@gmail.com](mailto:lesley.kugg@gmail.com)    027 4942414  
**Editor & Club Librarian:** Dianne June    [djune@xtra.co.nz](mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz)    8433066  
**Waikato Tramping Club account:** 03 1555 0091625 02 (& include the trip number)

## Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August

Details are yet to be confirmed. An email will be distributed with the details later this month or you can contact Stephen Prendergast.

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

**Time:** Doors open at 7.00pm, meeting starts at 7.30pm

**Cost:** \$2

**Film evening:** You are invited to another film evening at the Haines' place at 11 Alison st, at 6.30pm on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August. Bring a dish to share, your own meat to BBQ, and refreshments. Dessert, tea and coffee will be supplied. Cost: \$20

### ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2019

2835	13/14 July	M	Kaimai working party	John McArthur
2836	19/20 July	M	Snowcraft 2	Allan Wickens
2837	28 July	M	Hakarimata – the lot	Jacob Hamill
2838	4 August	E/M	Waitawheta	Dave White
	9 August		Film evening	Graham Haines
2839	11 August	M	Kaimais – DC3 crash	Tristan Brown
2840	17/18 Aug	M	Tongariro under a full moon	John McArthur
	21 August		South Is trip planning	Keith Robbins
2841	25 August	E/M	Wairere falls to Te Tuhi track	Merlyn Warren
2842	31 Aug/1 Sept	M	Winter tramp	Mike Peck
2843	8 Sept	E/M	kahikatea & caves	Jacob Hamill
2844	14/15 Sept	E/M	Pureora baiting	Dianne & Selwyn June
2845	21/22 Sept	E/M	Rotorua walks	Allan Wickens
2846	29 Sept	E/M	Cycling in Hamilton	David Cumming

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

### TIME and FITNESS GUIDELINES

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Bookings and Cancellations: no later than the WEDNESDAY before the trip. 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.

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Email your contributions to the editor by **Friday, August 9th** please.

## **Trip Descriptions**

### **Trip 2835**

### **Kaimai Working Party**

**13/14 Jul**

This is your chance to see the newest hut in the Kaimai range and help develop the tracks leading to it. The new Te Whare Okioki Hut now has its roof on and work is continuing on finishing it off. The Kaimai Ridgeway Trust is asking us to help in:

- Improving the track (both clearing and track improvements) from the Kaimai Summit through to the new hut
- Hut build support to improve the hut environs with tidy up of the area and Heli Pad
- Levelling out the area and getting grass seed germinated before winter.

This weekend work party gives us an opportunity to see the new hut and help the program develop the ridgeway track.

**Leader:** John McArthur

**Ph:** 021 2889641

**Grade:** M

**Email:** [mcarthur@outlook.co.nz](mailto:mcarthur@outlook.co.nz)

**Transport:** Senior member \$ 45-55

Senior Non-member \$50-60

**Trip 2836****Snowcraft 2****19/20 Jul**

This trip will follow on from Snowcraft 1. You must have done the course held at the end of June, or have had previous experience. Friday night will probably be at Waikato Hut. This winter tramp typically is the opportunity for you to put into practice all those skills you have learnt. Again, you may hire the equipment needed for the club or source your own supply. Our actual destination is not yet confirmed at present but it is guaranteed there will be snow and ice to 'play' on and in. Maybe there will be a chance to build a snow cave and camp out for the night too. Current thinking is that we will drive to the Waikato Lodge (Hut) on the Friday and then walk high and camp high on the snow Saturday night. This can be done either on Ruapehu with a summit of one of the peaks of Ruapehu, camping high or by tramping Tongariro and summiting Tongariro, Ngauruhoe or both and camp in North or South Crater. As the trip is very weather dependent the plan for the weekend may change to suit weather, avalanche or other factors.

Obviously, you will need to have Snowcraft 1 experience, ice axe, crampons, and helmets and gear suitable for camping out on snow.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens **Email:** [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com)

**Grade:** M

**Transport:** Senior member \$50-65

Senior Non-member \$55-70

**Accommodation:** tba

**Crampons and ice axe hire:** TBA or it's BYO or hire them from other sources.

**Trip 2837****Hakarimata – the whole lot****28 Jul**

We will be starting this track from the southern end- off Waingaro Rd. From here it is approx. 2.5 hrs to the Hakarimatas summit (374m). We will then continue along the northern section to Parker Rd. The track is expected to take 7.5 hrs. On a fine day there are great views to the east and west of the ranges.

**Leader:** Jacob Hamill

**Ph:** 0273513158**Grade:** M

**Transport:** Senior member \$30-35

Senior Non-member \$35-40

**Trip 2838****Waitawheta****4 Aug**

Want to go on an easy tramp with barely a hill along the way? This is the one. The trade-off is that there will be a couple or 2 or 3 stream crossings to ensure your feet get washed. However, don't let these put you off as there are also stiles and bridges to help you on your way. This is a great trip that allows you time and space to view the bush around you as you walk. You begin with a womble alongside a stream on flat farmland for about ½ an hour and then begin the bush section. Lunch time will definitely see you at the lovely hut. There is an interesting loop walk nearby around a heritage area telling you about the milling and mining history of the area.

This is a great trip for children 5 years and up, provided you are prepared to help them across those streams – fun for the children though!

**Leader:** Dave White

**Ph:** 8491940**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior member \$30-35

Senior Non-member \$35-40

**Trip 2839****Kaimais – DC3 crash site****11 Aug**

The wreckage of DC-3 Skyliner ZK-AYZ *Hastings* is high up on the Kaimai range. We'll start on Thompson's track on the western side, sidling our way up to the top of the range, with (hopefully) some awesome views of the Waikato. Dropping from the range top into a small gulley, we then sharply ascend to the ridge top. This time (hopefully) with amazing views of the Tauranga Harbour and BoP coast. A short bush bash will lead to a collection of wreckage including a wing and the under carriage. We return the same way. In the past, this has been around a 10- hour trip but don't let this put you off as the tracks have improved since then. Bookings either to the landline or vis the club website booking option

**Leader:** Tristan Brown**Ph:** 07 8717722**Grade:** M**Transport:** Senior member \$30-35

Senior Non-member \$35-40

**Trip 2840****Tongariro under a full moon****17/18 Aug**

Saturday is 24 to 36 hours after full moon, with the moon rising at 7.15 pm and setting at 8.42 am on Sunday. Due to the logistics of asking our driver to drop us off in the evening and pick us up early the next morning (and as our driver wishes to accompany us) we will do the following plan.

We will drive down on Saturday afternoon, arriving at the Mangatepopo road end for a start at 7 or 8pm. Then walk up and over the Tongariro Alpine Crossing to the Emerald Lakes junction and head down to Oturere Hut where we can catch an hour or two of rest before reversing the walk and walk back to the van.

We will likely start under headlights until the moon rises over the South crater - so be sure you have good headlight and spare batteries. We will be in snow and Snowcraft 1 experience is required. Crampons, ice axe and helmet are required and can be hired from the club.

On the plus side, with a relatively short spell in the hut we may not need a sleeping bag, though may want to cook a feed.

I will be getting further info from others and may change details, but one element we would want to be clear is that we will maximize photographic opportunities. (If the moon is too bright we will repeat under a new moon in summer).

This is obviously a very weather dependent trip and a contingency plan will be developed if weather looks doubtful as we get close.

**Leader:** John McArthur**Ph:** 8564394**Grade:** M**Transport:** Senior member \$50-65

Senior Non-member \$55-60

**Trip 2841****Wairere falls to Te Tuhi track****25 Aug**

Start at the Falls track carpark, approx 1.5hr. to top of Wairere Falls. This is the only climbing for the day. At the falls we continue east to meet the North-South track. From here we will have the track to ourselves as we travel south along a

lovely bush track to meet the Te Tuhi Track. We will then head west descending to farmland and out to Te Tuhi Rd for our lift home. Approx 5.5hrs.

**Leader:** Merlyn Warren

**Ph:** 027 524 9926

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior member \$30-35

Senior Non-member \$35-40

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**Trip 2842**

**Winter tramp**

**31 Aug/1 Sept**

We'll drive down Saturday morning and park at Clements road end campsite, off the Taupo - Napier Rd. Taking the Hinemaiaia Track into Cascade Hut. 4-5 hours walk. On Sunday either, back the way we came or take the track over Kaipō Saddle to the Te Iringa Track junction, then on to Te Iringa Campsite. Ideally, we'll have two vehicles for this tramp. It's probably a 6-8hour walking day.

**Leader:** Mike Peck

**Ph:** 021 369256

**Grade:** M

**Email:** *Mikeypeck@yahoo.com*

**Transport:** Senior member \$50-65

Senior Non-member \$55-60

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**Trip 2843**

**Pirongia Kahikatea and caves**

**8 Sept**

A day out on Mt Pirongia walking to see the tallest recorded native tree in New Zealand, standing at 66.5m. We will also detour to see the two Kaniwhaniwha Caves. The main cave can be walked through, with a short hands and knees crawl at the end and the second cave is tight and narrow. Torches are required. This track follows the Nikau Walk and the beginning of the Bell Track. This track is expected to take 6hrs.

**Leader:** Jacob Hamill

**Ph:** 027 351 3158

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior member \$25-30

Senior Non-member \$30-35

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**Trip 2844**

**Pureora baiting**

**14/15 Sept**

Enjoy good company, an opportunity to be moving quietly through the bush with just one other person for company, listening to the birds, admiring the plants, stopping for photos with no thought to holding others up or having to catch them up, while feeling your pack get lighter as the day goes by? At the end of your walk you even get some treats. Well, this is the trip for you. You will be supporting the Pirongia Restoration Society with their pest control operation in the Okahukura Valley of Pureora Forest. We stay at the Lions Lodge in the forest and commute a further 40 minutes to our starting point. Friday night begins with H&S briefing and picking up the supplied safety gear, maps, and bait. Bring your weekend pack. A liner to put the bait in will be supplied. BYO sleeping bag, pillow, all food and refreshments, The Lodge has full kitchen and bathroom facilities (including hot showers), huge cool store, and bunkroom sleeping. There will be no charge for accommodation.

If possible, we would like to leave Hamilton by 6pm as it is a 2hour trip to the Lodge and there will be much to take care of before bedtime.

**Leader:** Dianne & Selwyn June

**Ph:** 8433066

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior member \$45-55

Senior Non-member \$50-60

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I am unboreable in the great outdoors. P. J. O'Rourke



## South Island trips in 2020

Each year WTC organizes a selection of multi-day tramps to the South Island, during summer and autumn. And we are now looking for suggestions for these trips.

Come to the 2020 trip planning evening with your dreams and we will see what can be done. Consider all grades from easy to superfit, any type of activity from tramping to cycling or packrafting or whatever tickles your fancy.

We'll meet at our usual venue, St Stephens church, on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August, starting at 7.30pm. There will be continuous refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits) served.

The initial choices of trips will appear in the September bulletin though the programme may be subsequently modified if leaders can't be found or there is insufficient interest.

If you have any queries or comments please contact Keith Robbins, 0211207752.

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### Editorial

Here's another good suggestion come to me from a member after my commenting on how I have to chase people up for their trip descriptions. Said member did not know that the date for submission was the last line to be read in the bulletin. So, I'm moving it to the start of the trip programme in the hope that it will assist you in getting your words to me in plenty of time.

And... I've been thinking... What do you think of the balance between words and pictures you see in the bulletin? Should there be more of one and less of the other? Which way around?

The postage cost went up at the beginning of this month. Many of you receive a paper copy (me too). Once your bulletin gets to 28 white sides, it gets rather difficult for Lesley to fold and meet the NZPost requirement – yep, they do measure the thickness of items being posted. Our bulletin hasn't been measured yet but the day may come. This may incur a higher cost to post. Are 28 sides too many? Should I ensure we don't exceed 24 sides and hold over some trip reports until the next bulletin. You are getting very prompt in sending in the stories after the trips – keep it up. I'm chasing up writers for trip reports I have not yet received in an effort to have a complete record for our archives – just like the first report this month.

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### Presidents' Blog

A busy month for the club. We were treated to a tour-by-cycle down the length of the country by Stephen at Club night, then there was a visit to the Radix company at Horotiu to see how their freeze-dried products, tailored for different diets and users, were produced. A local retailer put on an informative evening to look at the equipment suitable for snow and ice (thanks Bivouac).

But the main event of the month would have to be Snowcraft, with many exhilarated mountain fanatics returning with stories of reaching the top of Ruapehu in perfect, still weather and having learnt use of crampons, self-arrest and other survival techniques. The photos in Dropbox are great.

We are now being re-connected to the national outdoor recreation scene with Alan Grant's reports from his first Federated Mountain Clubs' executive meeting in Wanaka.

An organising team has met to plan celebrations for our 70th birthday next year (the club not me). We are thinking of a get-together or two, a party at Waikato Hut, a booklet covering the club's past activities and special tramping challenges over the whole year. A number of members have offered to help with the planning. Contact myself or Dianne if you have any ideas or would like to help. And the snow is coming; maybe just a little late. You can always go for a ride on the gondola / sky waka. Selwyn June

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### Waikato Ski Club

#### **Winter rates**

There's been a small increase in the adult rates this year in line with the increase in our operational costs. We do our best to keep rates affordable and the committee has done a great job making sure we're keeping the Hut (Lodge) a comfortable mountain location.

Members nightly rates: Adults \$35, Child (0-17yrs) \$20

Non-members nightly rates: Adult \$60, Child (0-17yrs) \$35.

#### **Mates Rates is back!**

You know what to do! Your mates need a break, some snow time and some down to earth chill out. They're your mates so we'll help out. You get them here, we'll convince them to keep coming back. Your Mates Rates give you 2 nights of members rates accommodation for a mate who comes with you to the lodge. 1 mate per member, kids/kids & Adults anyone. Contact the Booking Officer to book Mates Rates.

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Turoa got away first this year. Gondola completion and an absence of snow hasn't helped at Whakapapa - but it's looking quite promising. Apart from the wee storm early June there's been very little southerly flow to stoke up the mountain. That's all changing as you read this. It's our turn next. We'll have good falls over the weekend and leading into school holidays. The forecast looks promising after that as well. Pictures on facebook from last week's Club Snowcraft course show how little snow there's been so far. On the plus side, it was a fantastic weekend to walk to the crater and a good time was had.

The next few weeks will be a real cross-over time which means that there's plenty of good upper mountain exploring to be had from the Hut. Regular Hut users should consider joining the Ski section which repays itself in 2 weekends, and provides online access to the booking system. As a member you will also be

able to take advantage of our Mates Rates deal - where you can bring a mate for a weekend at members' rates.

The Gondola started operation early in July. For non-skiers it's a very comfortable and scenic ride up to Knoll Ridge cafe, with the 1.8km trip taking around 5 mins. Reconfiguration of the cafe has resulted in food truck style dining downstairs complementing the new restaurant configuration upstairs. There'll be less ad hoc seating though - which will result in some interesting dining arrangements for people who are coming indoors with the traditional BYO lunch option.

Some other activities include a ski-from-the-crater day, some off trail touring and the annual Ski Races mid-September. If you would like to join us for any of these please get in touch.

There have been a couple of small changes for access and parking. The start of route to the Hut is slightly closer to the lifts, but largely the same as previous years. There's not much snow there currently but that will change and probably restore the access route. Carpark 1 remains the only designated public overnight parking facility. The other carparks will be closed off to keep them clear for morning de-icing.

If it's your first time to the Hut please make sure we are aware of this as on most nights we can get someone down to make sure you get up safely - it's not difficult but we don't want people wandering around lost at night.

It's best to check on the Ski Club website - [www.waikatoskiclub.co.nz](http://www.waikatoskiclub.co.nz) - for directions and then have a look on Google for exact location. I've added the Hut label to the map and it's waiting for Google to approve it. We're just above Te Horonuku adjacent to Tennents Valley.

### **Mid-Week Skiing is on.**

Why ski weekends when you can ski mid-week? Not every winter holiday needs a tropical beach (or a pool with a floating bar). By holidaying at home you're also doing your bit to control climate change. Our first mid-week skiing event runs from July 31. You can do as many days as you like and the weekend if that's your thing. This is a club event - so you can get all of that friendly social vibe when you leave the slopes and head back to the Lodge

The first one is from Wednesday July 31 - Friday August 2. A second one will be arranged for later in August if we get enough interest. Everyone is welcome for these events.

### **Whakapapa Parking Changes**

The perennial parking scrap is back on the table with RAL determining that only Carpark 1 will be left available for overnight (read club) parking. Loop road and roadside parking is still available but there are going to be fewer overnight spaces this season. The Bruce Road will be closed once all of the day parks are filled and there will be no drop offs permitted once this occurs. Shuttles will be available but will cost \$20 pp return. It's an ongoing challenge that we'll be working on with other clubs.

..... **From the Ski Committee** .....

We've been working on our power usage and charges over the last month. We had a good result with a nice refund as well as a \$500 sign on bonus from switching to Meridian. We still need to watch our overall peak use but it's a good win.

We're doing some work on getting water filters in place and hope to get that sorted this season. We're also looking at getting a webcam up, overlooking the West up to Paretaitonga or across to the Pinnacles - but RAL have Pinnacles pretty well covered.

If you have a friend or family member who is interested in membership please encourage them to get in touch. Membership is our best chance for a vibrant and enjoyable club, and we want to share our Lodge/Hut with many more like minded people.

Reminder

A new alcohol policy was decided by the committee this season. We did this because our school groups are more sensitive to the presence of alcohol and we've taken that on board.

- If a school group is in residence there is to be no alcohol consumption at the Lodge/Hut. (*We don't book school groups on weekends.*)
- When not being consumed, alcohol should be stored either in a locker or in your luggage.
- U18s who are staying at the Lodge without a parent are not permitted to consume alcohol.

We don't expect this to change how our social environment is enjoyed. We're just trying to clarify some grey areas, which will help us in the future as we continue our ongoing relationships with a number of schools and groups for young people. If you have any questions please feel free to get in touch by email  
Looking forward to seeing you at the Hut this winter. Stephen

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**Trip reports**

**Trip 2793**

**Pirongia**

**18 Nov, 2018**

14 trampers assembled in the usual spot and headed out west. As we approached Pirongia she was shrouded in cloud. We parked at Kaniwhaniwha car park and ambled along the track until we hit the large open expanse which was the camping ground. From here we veered left and headed up the Tahuanui Track. This was a lovely steady climb for the first 2 hours or so and then became somewhat more challenging with tree roots almost like the trees trying to give us the hint not to continue in their domain. After another hour or so our two drivers bid us farewell and turned back down the track so they had time to drive around and then climb up to Ruapane to meet us. We continued on over tree roots and up and down hillocks. We stopped for a relatively early lunch



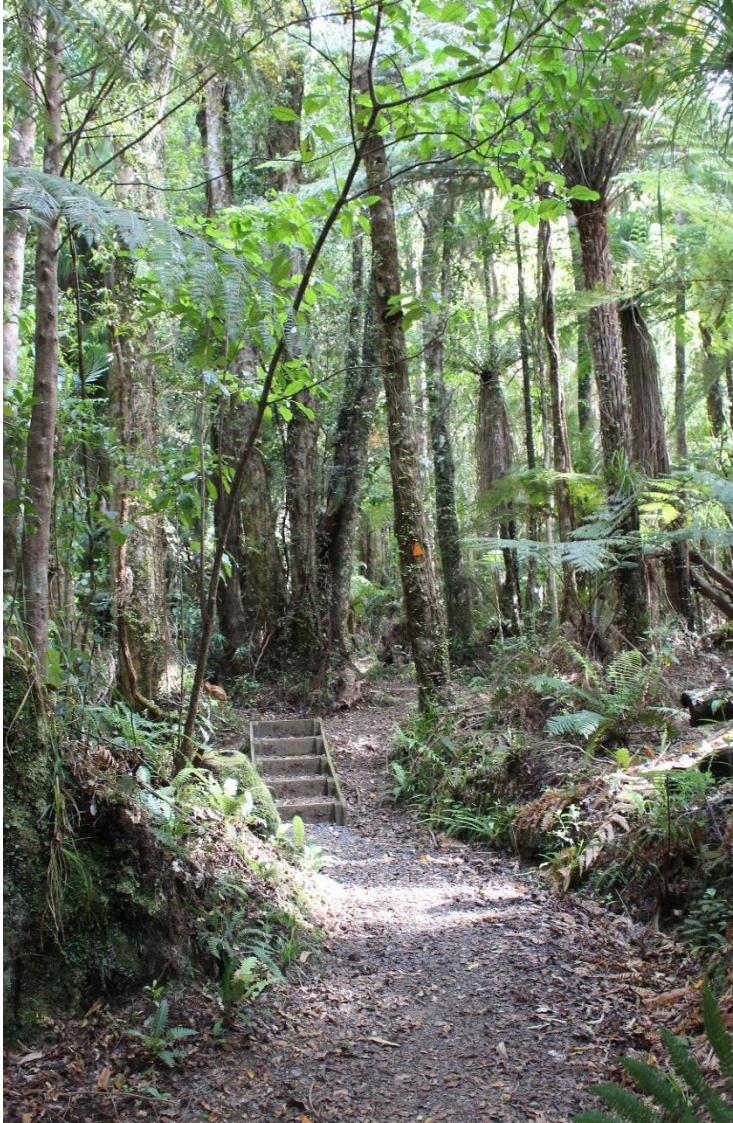
Ruapane chains

Photographer unknown

which was timely to recharge batteries and refuel. We continued upwards until we hit the junction for the lookout/hut and the track down to Corcoran road. Eight trampers whipped off up to the lookout for a few quick photos - one must have evidence of having actually been there! From here there were views out to



both Raglan and Kawhia and then out across the Waikato in all directions. The other four had a brief rest before starting the journey down the track. This was somewhat challenging in a number of places where it was steep (chains provided) or there were lots of roots and long steps down.



Thanks to Allan W for teaching some of the “newbies” how to come down rocky areas safely, without using the chains – great to have this type of support when you are newish to tramping. We sidled around some beautiful rock formations and landed up with some amazing views out over the Waikato again. We eventually got to the trig at

The friendly Tirohanga track

Photographer unknown

Ruapane and there were some sighs of relief when the track became a little more user friendly. We trooped off down to the bottom where the van was reposed and waiting for the short trip home. John did very well with managing the weather which cleared for us to have a great view from the top and even though



and the famous Tararua clag descended around us.

We made good progress nonetheless and by early afternoon made our way around and over the Tararua Peaks to arrive at the 21 metre ladder that descends one of the Peaks (see FMC backcountry quarterly March 2019, a photo of the ladder is on the cover) With no hesitation, everyone was down the ladder in no time and then using the wire ropes to sidle around some other difficult parts before a short climb and the sanctuary of Maungahuka Hut. This turned out to be our earliest finish (3pm) for the trip which was timely as the weather hadn't improved.

Such is the reputation of the Tararua weather for being so changeable, the following day was clear and sunny and made for great travel continuing up the Main Range over the main peaks of Aokaparangi and Kahiwiroa and on to lunch at Anderson Memorial Hut. The sunny and hot weathered continued as we reached Junction knob and onto the Te Araroa Trail over Mount Crawford and the sharp descent into Nichols Hut to finish an 8hour walking day.

We had planned for some offtrack adventures and the claggy weather returned to add some spice to our descent into Park Forks. A few navigation challenges and a bit of bush-bashing on our way down allowed JD to feel right at home. We had a break at the river and after a little searching found the ribbons that lead us up Dorset Ridge. Good travel up the ridge and we broke out of the canopy to clearing weather and some lovely tops travelling. Another 8hour day got us to Tarn Ridge Hut, the northern point of our tramp.

Day Five was the best weather of our trip, a glorious sunny day for travel along the tops. An early climb up Mount Girdlestone gave great views over the Wairarapa and right down the central region of the Tararuas. We climbed over the 1500m peaks of North, Middle and South King and around the Broken Axe Pinnacles before the climbs over McGregor and Angle Knob. Aartsie was pleased to knock off six 1500m peaks in little more than half a day. We had a look around Jumbo Hut then descended down to Atiwhakatu Hut for our fifth night in a Tararua Hut to conclude a 9hour walking day.

Day six was our "rest day" as we thought we'd have an easy day walking down the valleys to Cone Hut but the climb up River Ridge Track was deceptively sharp - any ideas of an easy day were nipped in the bud there and then. We made Totara Flats Hut for lunch and then some lovely valley walking through the Flats with toitoi in abundance and river terraces to admire.

Up and over Cone Ridge and down to the historic Cone Hut for what was our last night in the Tararuas. Another nearly 9hour day and over 1200m climbed. We had a swim in the river and Al Fresco dining on a table nearly as old as the hut (1946). The evening was warm and for me, it was the quintessential Tararua experience shared with good company.





Allan W at Cone Hut

photo by Mike Peck



The tussock flats

photo by Mike Pec

The last day was made longer by deciding to walk out to Otaki Forks instead of a night at Kime Hut. We were up before 6.00am for an al fresco breakfast and a 7.00 departure. It was straight into an 800m climb up the Bull Mound track then down and up through Hells Gate for a late morning arrival at Alpha Hut. The weather was sunny and warm but not long after leaving Alpha Hut dark clouds could be seen (as forecasted). We were on the Dress Circle track (being part of the popular Southern Crossing trip) when the wind started rising and the showers started. We stopped to put on the storm gear and made the dash to the war memorial cross erected on the top of Mount Hector by the members of the Tararua Tramping club to commemorate club members who had fallen in the World Wars. All of us were blown over at some stage and it made for challenging tramping.



Memorial cross on Mt Hector

Photo by Mike Peck

A brief photo stop at the Cross and then on to Kime Hut for hot food and shelter from the weather. We left the hut at 3.00pm for the descent to Otaki Forks and a 7.30pm arrival back at the carpark. It turned out to be a monster days tramping, over 2200metres climbed and 25km's walked.

A wonderful trip was completed that had everything you 'd want in a Tararua trip, good weather, views, neat and tidy huts, valley travel, but most of all, good company and camaraderie with WTC members.

We ascended over 10,000 thousand metres and walked over 120km's in what was, to quote John D, "A beautiful but brutal tramp"

Participants: Mike P (scribe), John D, John A, Paul Q and Callum McD.



**Trip 2814****River Crossing Training****10 Mar**

Every year the Waikato Tramping Club holds a basic river crossing course, in order to teach its members and others, how to safely cross rivers and when to cross. This year we had a very dry summer (not quite a drought though) and the February date for the course was postponed as the river we use, the upper Waipa, was very low.

A month later, and things were not a whole lot better. The hoped-for flush of flood water during the week didn't eventuate. Not to be put off however, our group travelled to Rangitoto Station where we parked the van and crossed farmland down into the river.

This year, there was insufficient flow for realistic pack-floating, but the fundamentals of river-crossing could still be taught regardless. As expected, the river was quite slippery with slime so this made for some challenging crossings. After doing a small exercise in crossing and re-crossing while travelling downstream, we reached the small gorge and returned for lunch.

Fine weather prevailed making for mostly pleasant conditions. Thanks again to Rhonda and Hamish for access across Rangitoto Station.

All agreed that it was a lovely way to spend a day. The trainees were: Alex C, Fiona G, Jo W, Margaret C, Charlene S, Rizal R, Jacob H and Beverley D.

Allan Wickens instructed, drove and also wrote this report.

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

Most of the group met at the McCaw Lewis carpark to leave sharp on Saturday at 8.00am and we travelled to Kihikihi where we were joined by two others bringing our numbers up to seventeen. At Kihikihi we purchased coffee and some tasted the local pie shop's prize-winning pies -Mike is a special fan of this shop. We then drove via Piopio in convoy as three of the party had also driven with Mike in his car. Eventually we reached the Leitches Road end carpark where our tramp began.

From the road end the track follows a well benched and is easy graded with an ever upward route to a saddle, but sticking at first closely to the farmland before reaching pure dense bush. Occasionally we had excellent vistas down through the bush across the farmland right down to the Mangaohoe Stream far below. Eventually we reached the saddle and again on the downward side, the track is clear and benched following right down the southern side of the valley to the Awakino River and Leitches Clearing. By this time it had started to rain and so we were all wearing raincoats and we also became somewhat strung out. By the time I arrived at the hut after walking for approximately 15 minutes through the actual clearing, a fire of sorts was going and palls of smoke were emerging from the chimney. There was some elation at this sight, which soon however turned to disappointment as there was no firewood to be found. Only small sticks and bracken fronds. So no fire. But the hut was empty. Not for long – there were 17 of us and we were soon joined by numerous others who came in in dribs and

drabs. These included Mike Nightingale and Dawn who arrived independently just on dark. Three tents were pitched outside and the floor of the hut was covered with bodies. With all those people a fire was definitely not needed. Included with the mob was a very friendly and well-behaved dog and also some younger children. Some people played cards and some drank too much (no names but this was after all Leitches Clearing). Still, a good and convivial evening.

Next morning we were off at 9.00am for the return journey back the way we came.

Since I was there last the bush seemed to have grown a lot and there were lots of tawa and young rimu seedlings. The view down to the Awakino Valley on the return as we worked our way up to the saddle was beautiful in places especially as it was raining – this added to the ambience of the bush as the rain showed up against the bush background. Eventually the Leitches Road carpark showed up and we changed into dry clothes –the sun came out too – especially for us!

Then we were off. Not quite however, as I had left my wallet on another parked vehicle in the carpark and shortly after starting has to ask John W (our driver) to go back. Thank you, John. My penance is writing this report.

Thank you everyone. It was a good trip. Those on it were: Mike P (Leader), John (driver) & Jean W, Dawn A, Mike N, Leslie W, Merlyn W, Jodi B, Kim T, Barb C, Laurette S, Rizal R, Damon M, Lesley K and Alan W(scribe).

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### **Trip 2833**

### **Basic Snowcraft**

**29/30 Jun**

Sometimes luck just goes your way – as the saying goes. And this is what happened when we held our annual basic Snowcraft course at Whakapapa. The previous Monday was fine and the forecast was for seven straight days of fine weather. Yeah, right – as if that happens in our mountains! It'll be like every other time where we waste time at work knowing the week-end weather will turn to custard. How wrong we were. The following week-end had probably the best two-days in this prolonged fine spell. All great stuff for us tramping types but no good for the poor skiers who are enduring one of the worst starts to the ski season in years.

Two groups arrived on Friday night and met up with Sharon and David who had driven down from Rotorua. The walk up to the hut was mostly on rock and the lower slopes looked rather sad for the skiing members on this Course.

After the usual safety briefing we retired knowing we had some work to do the next day. As usual, all of Saturday was devoted to 18nowcraft instruction and practice. This year, we had to climb high to get to the slopes we needed for practicing self-arrest in particular. After several hours spent climbing, sidling and sliding on the mixed snow and ice, we all reached the New Zealand Alpine Club hut at about lunch time.



Snow angels

Photo by Jodi Belbin

From where the hut is located on an outcrop, we were able to see that the new gondola was almost ready for public use – bar finishing off the upper station building which is still a work site.



Practicing what you've learnt

photo by Stephen Prendergast

John and Mike took their group back down to our 'lodge' via the ridge while the other group, led by Allan and Stephen returned the way they climbed up. After a convivial Saturday night with accompanying sunset, we retired knowing the next day would be at least as good as the Saturday. Sunday dawned without the forecasted cloud and as the saying also goes "it turned out to be a cracker" John and Mike led the way with their group, taking the easy option of the Whakapapa Glacier route initially, before climbing up onto the saddle before the Dome by a partially iced-up route. They were already heading down and advised the following group not to take that route. Using prudence and discretion but mainly the urgings of those in the group, Allan and Stephen carried on up into the crater by taking the easiest available course. Some in this group were overwhelmed at getting to this point. Jacqui was very happy as this was the first time she had been to the crater in some 31 years. (*Ed comment: see her comments below*).



Crater Lake

Photo by Liz Halsey

For most, it was not only the first time on snow, but to get to the crater on such a magic day was an amazing bonus. The sky was so blue it was almost black, and the various ice and snow conditions made for a perfect medium for snowcraft practice.



The successful team

Photo by Dave White

The first group made their way back by down-climbing into the crater and then regaining the route next to the first “bump” leading to Dome. The second group returned in their own tracks, making the Hut after an 8hour day. Allan was particularly pleased that there was a 100% success rate in that all 20 who attempted the climb to the crater managed the feat.

We all returned to Hamilton and other points, knowing that luck was on our side this time. And as I write this, the skiers are about to be rewarded with a reasonable dumping of snow – just in time for the school holidays.

The happy group were: Allan Wickens (Co-ordinating Instructor and scribe), John Mac , Mike P, Stephen P (all instructors), Jacqui D and Ashley H (Drivers and cooks), Parva Z, Helen M (who was ill and unable to climb but managed a walk on Sunday), Sharon S, Kathy T, Jodi B, Kim T, Lisa D, Dave & Debbie W, Dorothy C, Liz H, Kerstin S, David H, Alex W and John A

### **Snowcraft Trip 2019**

The last time I climbed Ruapehu was over 30 years ago and it was not a pleasant experience. I had absolutely no snowcraft knowledge and we went totally unprepared. I still remember crossing a very icy slope near the top thinking I was too young to die! (Disclaimer: it wasn't a club trip!!)

So, Sunday was a chance to do it in much, much better conditions. The weather gods aligned and it was an opportunity not to be missed. It was such a fantastic day, no wind, deep blue sky, stunning views right out to Mt Taranaki, not too much ice and we made it to the top!! It was exhilarating. We had lots of stops for photos (and an excuse to catch our breath!)

I would like to sincerely thank Allan, Stephen, John and Mike on behalf of all of us on snow craft for giving up their time to come and teach us such useful and valuable skills. The club is very lucky to have leaders like you who have so much knowledge of alpine hiking and who are happy to share it with the rest of



us. I have been in the club for 34 years now and I would have to say that this was one of the best day trips I have ever done. Jacqui Dick

.....

### **FITNESS WALK / FUN / FLAGSTAFF**

These have been cancelled for the interim due to lack of participants, and travel plans of some of the stalwarts. Watch this space for news if the walk is recommenced.

#### **From the committee table:**

**New members:** Parva Zareie

**Resignations:** Peter Ayson, Naomi King, Magdalena Petrova.

**Membership:** We have 182 tramping members.

**From the club captain:** Good news for all members and especially trip leaders! Mike at Bivouac has set up a box from which you can now pick up a tent fly, first aid kit and PLB that every trip leader should carry (if you haven't got your own). You will have to sign for whatever you take, and get it back in time for the next person to be able to use it. There are 2 sets of this gear so prompt return is expected. You do not have to be going on an organised club trip to use the equipment but the same conditions apply. Check the outside back cover of your bulletin for the Bivouac outlet address

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#### *Snippets from here 'n there....*

- **70<sup>th</sup> reunion** planning time. Do you have any suggestions about how to celebrate this? So far, we have an idea of a function at Waikato Hut too.
- **Photo competition.** Our Annual competition closes this year on August 20. **Entries must be supplied by the closing date in digital form.** We aligned to the FMC rules last year. This year there are some extra options on trial:
  - Above bushline (with no human element)
  - Above bushline (with a human element)
  - Below bushline (with no human element)
  - Below bushline (with a human element)
  - Historic
  - Native flora and fauna
  - Long exposure – *Trial category for 2019.* Photography of scenes that the naked eye cannot normally comprehend. The category is intended for highly technical images of shots taken at night, (including star trails), or in extremely low light situations such as caves or canyons.
  - We also have the 2 WTC categories of: **Club Character** and **International.**

FMC is introducing an annual theme to the competition, which encourages photography that documents topical places which we are fighting for, current campaigns we're battling and values under immediate threat. The theme in no

way restricts entries, it merely offers a little reward for entries consistent with the theme! And this years' theme is Forgotten Lands

➤ **Tramping club to gift new track to Pukekohe.** The Auckland region will soon have a new walking and cycle trail that starts as soon as you hop off a train. Pukekohe's Five Summit's Track will start and finish at Pukekohe Station. It will take people on a 21 km journey linking the town's five volcanic hills in a loop. Pukekohe Tramping Club has been designing the track. It plans to gift it to local people on the club's fiftieth birthday on 10 November 2019. Club member Dee Keys is on a subcommittee helping to create the walk. She says Pukekohe's geological area has old volcanos around the central town. There are also lots of parks, reserves, and existing paths. "So it's sort of putting together what already there," says Dee. The Walking Access Commission is supporting the new track with an Enhanced Access Grant of \$4000. This will help with the cost of trail maps, map design and signs. The signboards will explain the geological, historical and cultural significance of the view from each of the five hills.

*Source: Walking Access Commission*

➤ Research led by University of Exeter found that people who spend at least 120 minutes a week in nature are significantly more likely to report good health and higher psychological wellbeing than those who don't visit nature at all during an average week. Gender, age, wealth ability, occupation and ethnicity had no bearing on the effect. *Quoted from item in Hamilton press July 3, 2019.*

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

➤ DoC is sending a strong message to tourism operators that they must comply with the law operating on public conservation land. DoC has released figures from a targeted compliance programme focusing on guiding and transport operators at high volume tourist sites in the South Island this summer. Te Wāipounamu compliance initiative employed rangers on fixed term contracts to carry out checks on operators at Punakaiki, South Westland, Wanaka, Wakatipu and Te Anau. The initiative found that, about a quarter were found to have either breached their conditions or were operating illegally. In instances where the concessionaire was found to be in breach of their conditions, or an operator was found to be operating commercially without the required concession, DoC sent a compliance letter to the operator. Operators were given a deadline to

..... *from our FMC rep* .....

Hi all,

I've been in the club for about 20 years and have held a few committee positions including Club President 2014-2017 and Transport Officer 2014-2018. I was recently honoured to be nominated by WTC to join the National Executive of

FMC (Federated Mountain Clubs), the peak body in NZ for outdoor recreation. This role started by me attending their meeting in Wanaka at the end of June and runs for 3 years.

As thanks for the opportunity and to help WTC members know more about recreation issues in NZ in 2019, I offered to update you all through a brief column in each monthly bulletin as to what is happening in FMC as it strives to fulfill its' mission of advocating for outdoor recreationists like us trampers. FMC was formed in 1931, has 22,000 members and over 100 clubs, like ours, as members. It is run by a 16person Executive, all voluntary and lead by Jan Finlayson from Geraldine. I am the only one residing north of Taupo. It has a staff of about 1.2 FTEs with 4 officers located around the country working part time. It is funded by subs and grants from two charitable Trusts.

This month's column is by way of an introduction, and next month it will have more detail on various current issues. FMC has an excellent website at [www.fmc.org.nz](http://www.fmc.org.nz) and another info site at [www.wilderlife.nz](http://www.wilderlife.nz). These are both worth a look to see what's on offer. The main site has FMC's Strategic plan and copies of recent submissions made by FMC on various matters, while *Wilderlife* has lots of info on great things to do in the outdoors. In addition, FMC publishes and distributes free to members a quarterly mag called *Backcountry* with lots of interesting and relevant info.

FMC is founded on 4 simple principles that it wishes to see maintained

- Access for all to the hills
- Equality of all in the mountains
- Stewardship of the Conservation estate
- Mountains without handle rails

I joined FMC to help the battle to retain these goals as all come under regular threat from development, tourism, weak government enforcement and climate change

Current issues being worked on by FMC, which I will expand on more next month, include tramping restrictions caused by reacting to Kauri Dieback, the Backcountry Trust's efforts helping volunteers maintain and build NZ's huts and tracks, a review of Walking Access Act, the changes planned to tenure review in the South, the review of Management Plans for various National Parks, offering Leadership Training for Clubs, what we can meaningfully do to reduce our impact as trampers on the environment, and lots more. I look forward to sharing more on these with you through this column each month

If you have any queries on any of this or would like more info, please contact me on 0274 501 530 or at [alan.grant@fmc.org.nz](mailto:alan.grant@fmc.org.nz). Have a good month enjoying our wintry outdoors.

Alan G



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