

## RANGIPO HUT LOOP

**260 Series Map:** Ruapehu, T20

**Topo50 Map:** BJ34 Ruapehu & BJ35 Waiouru

**How to get to START:** The route to the start can be traced opposite down SH1 from Taupo through Turangi and then down the Desert Highway .

Exit the Desert Highway as shown opposite turning right on to the **Tukino Access Road** shown as the pink line – taking note of the signs at the start about 2 wheel drive vehicles.

Follow the gravel road and at the obvious **Y-fork go right** as turning left is posted as Army territory. Variants of the road weave around a little bit but follow the poles and in wintertime watch out for some minor puddles to rather large stretches of wet flooded areas.

The **2 wheel-drive car park** is reached in 15 minutes and a further 20 minutes is required to reach the repeater station with twin masts. Park near the masts (**RH01** 1419masl) or even at the start of the Round-the-Mountain track (**RH02** 1425masl)

**Rough description:** A moderate A to B tramp covering 14km in 4-5 hours including refreshment breaks that takes you to the Rangipo Hut then cross-country back to near the Desert Highway passing through the area of the Lahar flow of early 2007. There are a few areas where care has to be exercised since in the summer the ground is rough with ankle turning opportunities and, in wintertime, some of the slopes could be icy. There is a height gain of about 200 metres to reach the hut and a loss of about 400m on the way back down to the road. A few climbs are a bit steep and tricky, especially on the return leg.

In addition the return leg borders the NZ Army Training Area and care must be taken not to stray into this restricted zone. Obviously this tramp can be done in either direction and a possible exploratory return route has been plotted but not tramped.

**Detail:** The Tukino Access Road leads to the Tukino Alpine Village which previously was a ski centre; you will see some of the huts or lodges from the Round-the-Mountain track as the walk proceeds

Due to “not having the best skiing conditions or access” the area has now been taken over for use for Outward Bound or outdoor skills and training for youngsters. From the suggested car park (**RH01** 1419masl) walk up the road from radio masts heading in a WSW direction for 5 minutes to where the “Round-the-Mountain” track crosses the road (**RH02** 1425masl) and turn left off the road on to the well sign-posted track heading off in a SE direction. As can be seen on the map the present track does not quite follow the line of the mapped track and it does “wobble” about a little bit but basically heads SSW crossing a few minor stream lines on the way. Within 35 minutes the first of the larger stream (**RH03** 1400masl) lines is crossed and the track follows then runs parallel to a minor, sandy stream bed to climb up on to the next crest or ridge. The well poled track can be seen a fair distance ahead most of the time as it winds its way up and down through the various stream lines. After about 1 hour 10 minutes the footing gets a bit rougher and loose whilst the slope down into one of the tributaries of the Whangaehu is steeper than previously. Once cresting the far side of this valley the first of the “Lahar” warning signs (**RH04** 1464masl) is encountered – this sign may be out of date now but it is a good historical marker. A few minutes later there is a second sign with a good view of the Lahar gully (Whangaehu River valley) and the refurbished bridge which was badly damaged during the Lahar outburst – the bridge (**RH05** 1451masl) being reached within about 1 hour 35 minutes of leaving the car park.

Once over the bridge turn hard right upstream in a narrow rocky channel which is steep in places.

Then pass through the “rock wall” sitting on the minor rise and down through the next channel and up a sandy gravelly slope to pass the “hazard board” (**RH06** 1476masl) on the south side of the Whangaehu River.

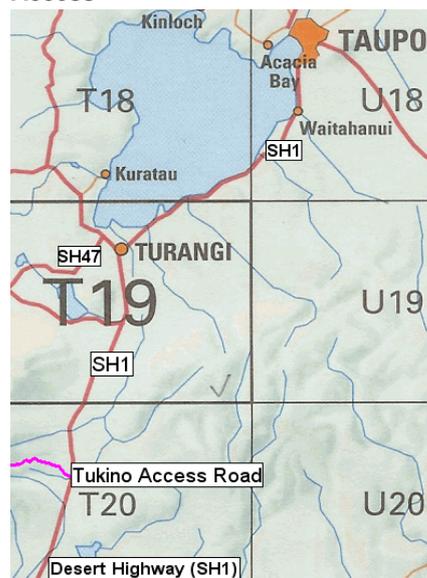
The Rangipo Hut (**RH10** 1561masl) is reached in about 2:30 minutes. This hut is quite exposed and can be difficult to reach in bad winter weather but offers about 20 bunks, wood burning stove, internal sink (no water supply) plus external sink with water supply and, of course, a modern toilet just above the hut.

For the return route retrace your steps for 7 -8 minutes then branch off the track (**RH11** 1550masl) down slope to the right (NE) and in minutes cross the stream line (**RH12** 1522masl) at a point about 200m upstream from some bluffs on this stream. Whatever you do you must not follow this stream downhill but continue upslope north eastwards.

**NZ Grid GPS:** Geodetic Datum 1949

**NZTM GPS:** NZTM on WGS84

### Access



*The drive from Taupo takes about 1:30 minutes covering just over 100km.*

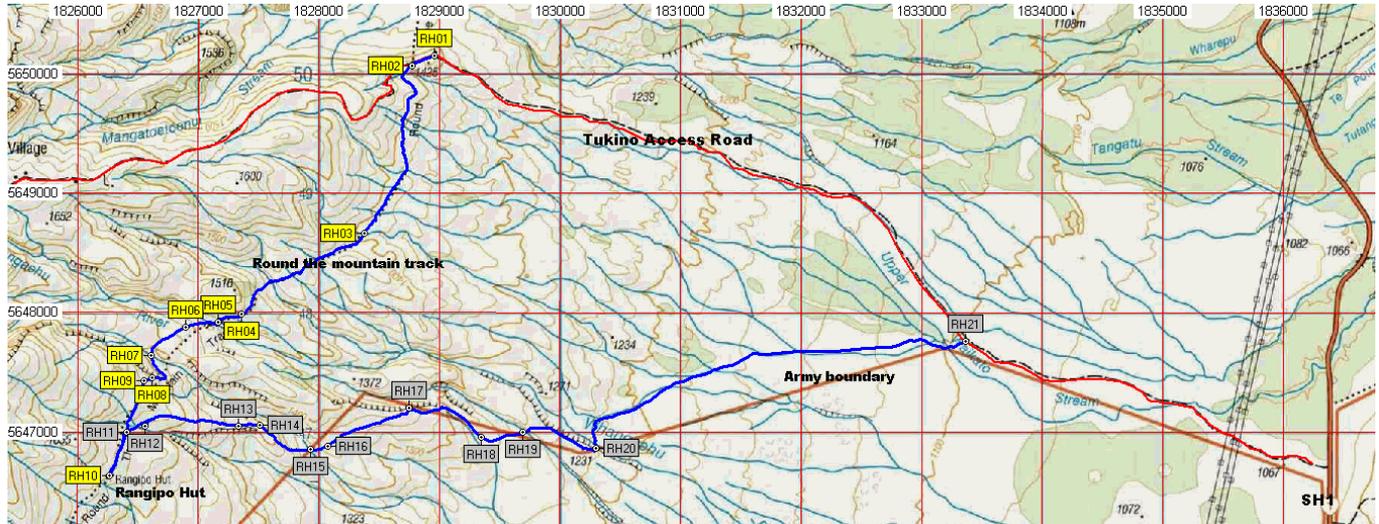
### The rocky channel



### Rangipo Hut



## Track and waypoints on map and Google Earth – anticlockwise route

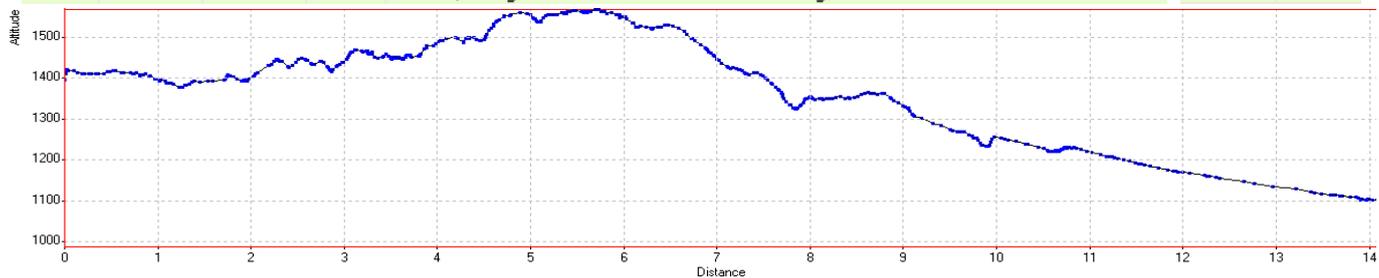


### Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
RH01	2738932	6212256	1419	12-SEP-07 Park below radio masts and just before Round-the-Mountain track
RH02	2738750	6212167	1425	5 min; junction with Round-the-Mountain track on Tukino Access Road wsw from masts
RH03	2738355	6210767	1400	35 min; into first sizeable gully on the Round-the-Mountain track (RMT)
RH04	2737334	6210090	1464	1:15 min; smoko at first Lahar warning notice
RH05	2737143	6210020	1451	1:36 min; middle of Rangipo bridge then upstream in rock gully
RH06	2736873	6209980	1476	1:45 min; at top of sandy, gravelly ascent and past "hazard" board
RH07	2736584	6209746	1488	1:50 min; sandy then rocky descent to stream and left to pick up new track alignment
RH08	2736600	6209559	1538	2:06 min; on new track alignment after steepish ascent
RH09	2736527	6209536	1552	2:10 min; back on old track alignment heading for Rangipo Hut
RH10	2736235	6208743	1561	2:30 min; at Rangipo Hut
RH11	2736381	6209100	1550	5 min from hut (3 hrs total); branch right (East) down ridge off track
RH12	2736535	6209155	1522	3:05 min; cross stream line 200m upslope from bluffs in the gully
RH13	2737312	6209149	1424	3:20min; on edge of very rough, steep bluffs. Go leftish on ridge away from bluff edge
RH14	2737488	6209156	1410	3:25 min; on crest of ridge - can sidle left or stay on top of spur down to stream
RH15	2737910	6208956	1326	3:38 min; stream line crossing with sub-rounded rock on spur above and to the left
RH16	2738049	6208986	1352	3:42 min; on spur crest about 150m below (SE) of sub-rounded rock and Army Area poles clear on RHS
RH17	2738723	6209305	1363	4 hours; above Lahar overflow channel. Descend steep slope then follow sandy motor track
RH18	2739325	6209060	1273	4:15 min; slip off road to the left heading ENE passing below small hill
RH19	2739668	6209103	1234	4:20 min; in middle of overflow channel before grunt up very unstable sandy, bouldery slope
RH20	2740273	6208969	1220	4:40 min; in middle of Whangaehu River (Lahar channel)
RH21	2743344	6209859	1103	5:20 min; meet gravel road after minor stream line crossing

### NZTM

Easting	Northing
1828944	5649883
1828761	5649794
1828367	5648393
1827347	5647715
1827156	5647645
1826885	5647605
1826596	5647370
1826612	5647183
1826539	5647161
1826247	5646367
1826393	5646724
1826548	5646779
1827324	5646773
1827501	5646780
1827923	5646581
1828062	5646611
1828736	5646931
1829338	5646686
1829681	5646729
1830287	5646595
1833359	5647488



As a reminder as to why you must not follow the above mentioned stream line have a look at the bluffs some 15 minutes later (**RH13** 1424masl), from here head slightly to your left, that is just north of east, and in 5 minutes you will be on the crest of a spur (**RH14** 1410masl) and it is easiest to stay on this spur working your way down to cross a stream line (**RH15** 1326masl) from where you can see a large sub-rounded boulder or rock on the slope on the far side of the stream. Cross the stream and start heading upslope to the NE and soon you should be some 150m below the rock (**RH16** 1352masl). If the walk is done in reverse this rock is a marker for a change in direction from SW to W and ensuring you stay on public land and do not stray into the NZ Army land. By this time the line of poles marking the Army boundary should be seen clearly on your right. At about 4 hours you should find yourself above (**RH17** 1363masl) and looking down into the Lahar overflow channel. There is now a steep descent and soon you can pick up an obvious motor track then branch left (**RH18** 1273masl) off this track round past a small hill and head ENE towards the Whangaehu River.

Cross the overflow channel (RH19) then the river (RH20 1220masl), which nowadays seldom has water as it flows under the gravel from the lahar. After the crossing there is a fairly serious, very unstable slope to ascend and care must be taken if any boulders are dislodged from this sandy, gravelly steep slope.

Once up the slope it should be possible to see where you are going which is basically NE following, but staying to the north of, the line of poles marking the edge of the army area. The last section out between waypoints RH20 and RH21 is a plod through loose, soft pumice and volcanic sands but it is easy though it can be a drag. Your transport should be visible waiting on the lower stretches of the Tukino Access Road (**RH21** 1103masl) and should be reached within about 5 hours total tramping time including rest and refreshment breaks.

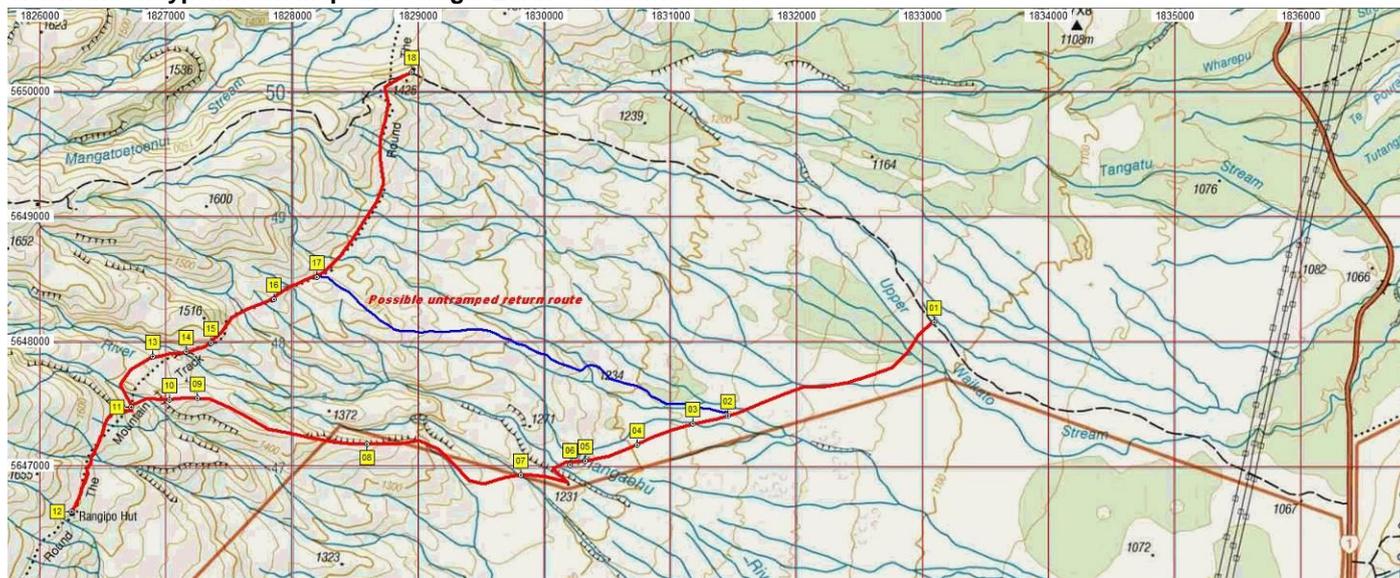
**Rangipo bridge**



**UPDATE:**

The tramp was repeated in June 2016 but walked in a clockwise direction from **WP01** on the lower section of the Tukino Access Road adjacent to the Army Area. The route is basically the exit route as described above and starts by walking parallel to the army boundary to eventually meet the Round-the-Mountain Track (RMT) then turn left for Rangipo Hut. The exit route followed was back along the RMT to the NNE / NE to reach the twin communication towers where transport can still reach; 4 wheel-drive can sometimes be required though. On the map below the "BLUE" line is an untramped possible return route to avoid transport having to go up to the twin towers.

**Track and waypoints on map and Google Earth – clockwise route**



N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	1833093	5648148	1105	Park on Tukino Access Road with view of poles marking army boundary
02	1831457	5647400	1159	1.77km (35min); Meeting point with possible off-track return route
03	1831184	5647338	1167	2.13km (40min); First noticeable stream line
04	1830741	5647167	1191	2.67km (50min); Stream line 50m north of army area marker pole
05	1830329	5647040	1214	3.05km (55min); Lahar overflow channel
06	1830211	5647009	1215	3.21km (1:01min); Mangaehuehu Stream / lahar channel
07	1829817	5646927	1245	3.83km (1:39min); Middle of overflow channel before grunt up very unstable sandy, bouldery slope
08	1828595	5647174	1376	5.15km (2:10min); Above lahar overflow channel
09	1827249	5647541	1475	6.53km (2:50min); More or less up and on ridge
10	1827030	5647530	1496	6.88km (3:06min); Close to mapped bluff
11	1826730	5647470	1492	7.20km (3:28min); Meet RMT left for Rangipo Hut right for home
12	1826257	5646635	1562	8.28km (4:23min); Rangipo Hut 9.4 GPS km
13	1826896	5647875	1476	9.82km (5:48min); at top of sandy, gravelly ascent near "hazard" board
14	1827167	5647915	1451	10.13km (6:02min); middle of Rangipo swing bridge
15	1827358	5647985	1464	10.28km (6:10min); Lahar warning notice
16	1827855	5648336	1444	10.92km (6:30min); High point between stream lines
17	1828199	5648511	1412	11.42km (6:47min); Turn right SE off RMT for new possible return route
18	1828950	5650149	1416	13.32km (7:25min); Car park at twin communication masts



- Notes:**
- **GPS** = Garmin GPSMap 60CSx and GPSMap62sc
  - **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
  - **masl** = metres above sea level