

CHATEAU to DESERT ROAD

260 Series Map: Tongariro T19 and T20 Ruapehu

Topo50 Maps: BH34-Raurimu, BJ34-Mnt Ruapehu, BJ35-Waiouru

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi then:

- In Turangi turn off SH1 on to SH41 on the right and then turn left off SH41 on to SH47
- Turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa and the Chateau
- Pass the Chateau on the left and turn almost immediately into the car park with toilets Park here or
- Leave car park, turn left and immediately right up side of the Chateau – park at the end of this road (**WS1** 1141 masl).

Rough description: A long, over 20km, rather boring walk which can turn into a bit of a route march, especially on poor weather days. Ascend almost 200m within 4km from the start then rolling to undulating terrain for 4km before descending from about 1310m to 978m at the Desert Highway. In good weather good views of both Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe plus glimpses of Lower Tama Lake and passing close to the new and old Waihohonu huts. *Drive to the start (and return) takes 1 hour 15 minutes from Taupo*

Detail: From the car park behind the Chateau head for the track that goes straight ahead at the end of the surfaced road and is signed Taranaki Falls [**WP01** 1147masl]. Proceed on the very good track through woodland with good birdlife crossing an open wooden bridge [**WP02** 1186masl] in about 20 minutes then upwards parallel to the gully which you then cross and go up on to open [**WP04** 1205masl], flattish moorland with a view of Ngauruhoe straight ahead. After 35 minutes or so descend off the moorland down to the Wairere Stream, over the bridge and uphill again reaching a signpost [**WP06** 1218masl] indicating the route for the lower path to Whakapapa on the left and to the Tama Lakes straight on. From here on the track is not manicured and tends to be rougher and muddier. In about 50 minutes there is a bit of a high point [**WP07** 1253masl] and then the track bears to the right whilst a very eroded hill face can be seen on the left and a long, slightly gruntish ascent starts.

In 1:10 minutes there is a roughish descent to cross a stream line [**WP8** 1310masl], in 1:40 there is a wet area [**WP09** 1290masl] with moss on the poles plus some boardwalk and 5 minutes later another descent on an eroded section of path before ascending into a narrow valley [**WP10** 1285masl]. On entering this valley cross the stream then follow a small branching stream off to your left. In around 1:50 minutes go right at the Y-fork [**WP11** 1301masl] which is signposted Tama Lakes and Waihohonu.

Tama Lakes or Waihohonu?



By this time you have done most of the ascending but now there is a steepish descent on a zigzag track down a very eroded area to a stream line [**WP12** 1296masl] then you ascend again in a long V-shaped valley after a river crossing. There is now quite a boring area (if the cloud is down there are no views) through rolling terrain but there is a glimpse of the Lower Tama Lake [**WP13** 1329masl].

A sheltered spot for lunch presents itself in about 3 hours below a small bluff [**WP15** 1183masl]. Half an hour after this there is a river channel to cross [**WP16** 1157masl] and off left from here a belt of trees is visible above a erosion cliff face. After crossing a river terrace there are several gullied channels / eroded slopes to negotiate (in about 4 hours) but generally these present no problem as generally the surface is sandy through a few are slippery.

Some sections of upgraded track appear and soon after this there is a Y-junction [**WP19** 1109masl] with a 5 minute diversion off right to the Old / Historic Waihohonu Hut and minutes later the New Waihohonu Hut can be seen off left. In 4:15 minutes there is a cross-roads [**WP19** 1109masl] when the “round-the-mountain” track is met plus the branch that goes to the new Waihohonu Hut.

NZ Grid
NZTM

GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949
GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access



Eroded hill



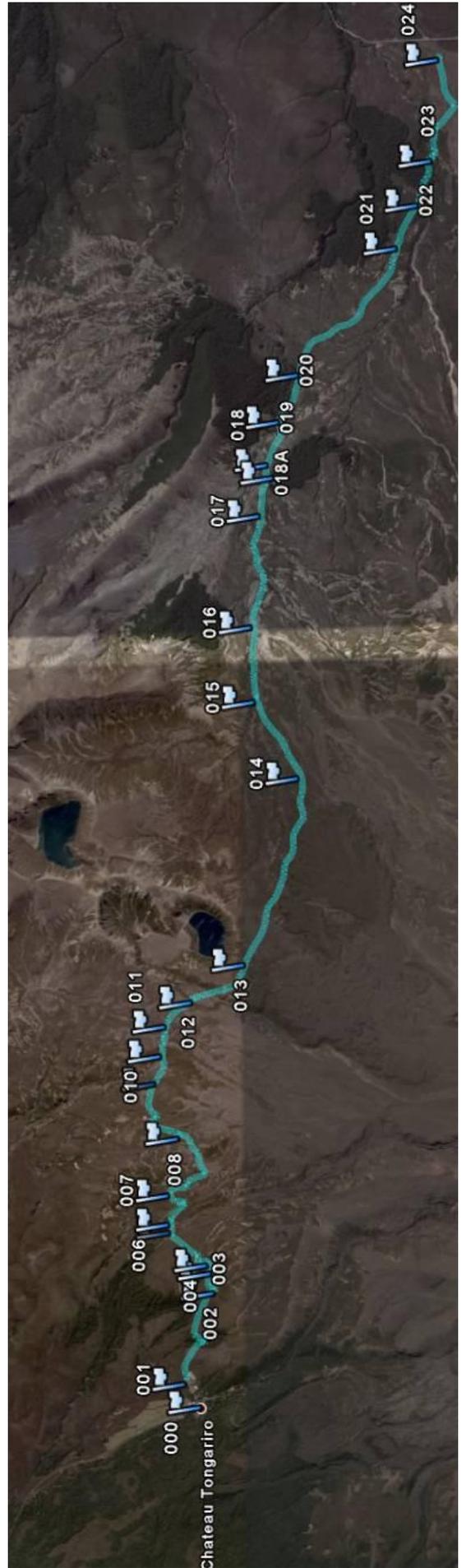
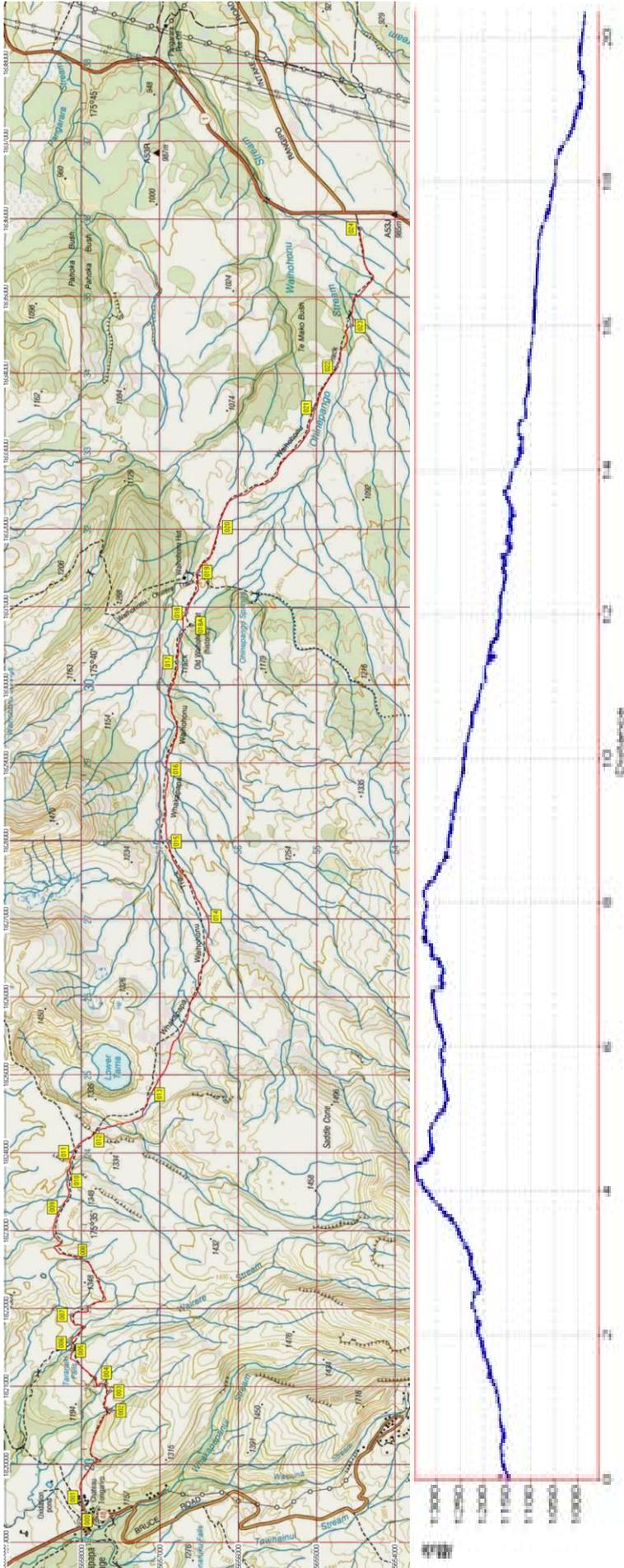
Lower Tama Lake



Lunch



Track and Waypoints on Map and Google Earth



Waypoints - NZ grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
000	2729273	6219915	1070	Car park with toilet opposite the Chateau
001	2729566	6220099	1147	10-OCT-07 Car park at end of asphalt road behind Tongariro Chateau
002	2730680	6219715	1186	20min; wooden bridge after passing through open woodland with many bird calls
003	2730925	6219745	1200	24min; S-bend in manicured path with bridge
004	2731028	6219790	1205	26min; pass through gullied area with boardwalk bridge then up to edge of lave flow
005	2731447	6220233	1209	37min; drop off moor to Wairere Stream and bridge
006	2731545	6220241	1218	50min; Y fork and sign for Whakapapa (Left) and Tama Lakes (Right) then normal track + mud etc
007	2731906	6220232	1253	40min; high point in levelish, eroded area with rilled hill to left then up long semi grunt
008	2732605	6220093	1310	1:10min; down pretty rough, eroded track to cross stream line
009	2733290	6220356	1290	1:40min; wet area with some board walk and moss on poles
010	2733629	6220278	1285	1:45min; down rough path to ascend narrow valley, cross stream then follow stream on left
011	2733996	6220211	1301	1:50min; Y-fork and sign Left for Tama and Right for Waihohonu
012	2734285	6219879	1286	2hours; zigzag down steep eroded slope then long g ascent to V-shaped valley after river crossing
013	2734731	6219224	1329	2:15min; rolling area with view of Lower Tama lake on the north (left) side
014	2737020	6218500	1232	2:50min; boring, rolling terrain with fair track in middle of nowhere
015	2737978	6219006	1183	3:05min; sheltered lunch spot below eroded pumice cliffs
016	2738904	6219015	1157	3:40min; cross river channel with trees visible off left above eroded cliff then onto river terrace
017	2740278	6218877	1143	4hours; several minor grunts up and down eroded channels and gullies
018	2740907	6218759	1124	4:10min; Y-fork with short diversion to right if desired to Old Hut with view of new hut 2 min later
018A	2740745	6218694	1111	Old Waihohonu Hut as 5 minute diversion off main path
019	2741431	6218610	1109	4:15min; X-roads with round the mountain track / Waihohonu Hut
020	2742007	6218353	1090	4:25min; enter section with trees on track
021	2743541	6217110	1058	4:55min; higher bush plus trees
022	2744067	6216835	1038	5hours; enter gullied area with slippery slopes then into trees
023	2744611	6216651	994	5:05min; down through trees then over bridge on Ohinepango Stream
024	2745861	6216533	981	5:25min; car park at end of track

NZTM

Easting	Northing
1819275	5657538
1819568	5657722
1820684	5657340
1820928	5657369
1821032	5657414
1821450	5657858
1821548	5657866
1821909	5657857
1822609	5657718
1823294	5657982
1823633	5657905
1824000	5657838
1824289	5657506
1824736	5656851
1827027	5656128
1827984	5656635
1828911	5656644
1830286	5656507
1830915	5656390
1830753	5656325
1831439	5656241
1832016	5655984
1833551	5654742
1834078	5654467
1834622	5654283
1835873	5654167

New Waihohonu Hut in the distance



By going right from this sign-posted junction there is just over one hour more to walk – and all regulars consider this bit to be rather boring as it is rather flat and featureless apart from passing through some trees, then a gullied area before a small patch of forest with a bridge [WP23 994masl] over Ohinepango Stream – however from the bridge to the track end is only another 15 minutes or so.

The gullies



Notes

- **GPS** = Garmin GPSMap60 CSx
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level