

## WAIHOHONU SPRINGS

**260 Series Maps:** Tongariro T19 & Ruapehu T20

**NZ Grid GPS:** Geodetic Datum 1949

**NZTM GPS:** NZTM on WGS84

**How to get to START:** Exit Taupo down the lake on **SH1** through Turangi on to the **Desert Highway** (SH1) for just over 15 km.

- Turn right off Desert Highway just after the Rangipo Intake Road onto gravel, motor track signed **Waihohonu Track**
- Drive in the few hundred metres and off-load in the car park (**WP01**<sup>978masl</sup>).

The route to the start can be followed opposite and takes about one hour driving.

**Rough description:** A relatively long, fairly taxing walk of 5-7 hours of almost 20km which can be considered in sections and it should be noted that the location of the Springs is incorrectly marked on the Topo50 maps:

1. From the car park (**WP01**<sup>985masl</sup>) near the desert road into the Waihohonu Hut (**WP04**<sup>1108masl</sup>) is an easy, if somewhat boring, walk taking between 1:15 and 1:30 min. This part is only boring if you have done it several times as the view of the mountain is great on clear days and there is some interesting, current gully erosion to study.

2. From the Waihohonu Hut there is a bit of a climb up the Oturere Hut track but the slope eases once the track is abandoned (**WP05**<sup>1265masl</sup>) to follow the ridge heading NW towards Tama

3. There is no track here but the walking is pretty good though stony and bouldery in places

4. At the upper end of the ridge (**WP08**<sup>1268masl</sup>) it is then necessary to get down into the Waihohonu Valley which runs parallel to the ridge. This involves a bit of a sidle on a heading of 300 magnetic increasing to 327 degrees swinging slightly to the north and past a lone tree (**WP09**<sup>1213masl</sup>) to reach the springs (**WP10**<sup>1191masl</sup>)

5. The route out can be the reverse of inwards or a bit of bush bashing, with numerous stream crossings, down the Waihohonu Stream then steeply upslope up to meet the Oturere track and back to the Waihohonu Hut.

**Detail:** The walk in to and out from Waihohonu Hut can, if done often, become a bit of a boring "blast" but it is not taxing and the chance to stretch the legs does exist at the start and end of the day. Features are the view of the mountain, a bridge 20 minutes (**WP02**<sup>997masl</sup>) after starting, some spectacular erosion of bits of the track and a view of the track a long way ahead. "Blasting" it takes just over an hour but relaxed walking gets you to the hut in about 1:30 minutes.

From the palatial Waihohonu Hut the track to Oturere is clearly marked as it heads down a flight of steps, over a metal bridge to pass through the DoC campsite with toilet then steeply uphill to pass the location of the older, now demolished Waihohonu Hut and from here things get a little bit steep. The views of Ngauruhoe from this steep uphill section can be fantastic so look up at times. After about 30 minutes from the hut there is a minor crest (**WP05**<sup>1265masl</sup>) and the route bears left off the marked track and continues up the ridge to the NW towards the Tama Ridge. There are vestiges of a path in places and the ground cover changes as tussock becomes stony and boulder covered in places – it can be windy on this section.

Approximately an hour from the hut there is a very large "obelisk" shaped boulder (**WP07**<sup>1263masl</sup>) from where a sandy, scree slope can be seen leading down into the valley on the right (N). Going down the scree slope is no longer the preferred route as it ends up in bog, tussock and fast flowing stream lines offering wet feet.



**WP07 Boulder**

From **WP07** the route sidles down the side of the ridge whilst slowly swinging to the NNE to pass a lone tree (**WP09**<sup>1213masl</sup>) to reach the springs. The edge of the pool (**WP10**<sup>1191masl</sup>) makes a good lunch spot.

The easy option for returning is to follow the inwards route in reverse targeting the lone tree (**WP09**<sup>1213masl</sup>) to the SSE and sidle up the slope to get back to **WP07** rather than going all the way down the Waihohonu Stream as shown on the map to **WP0T**.



**Trampers at WP05**



**The bubbling spring**

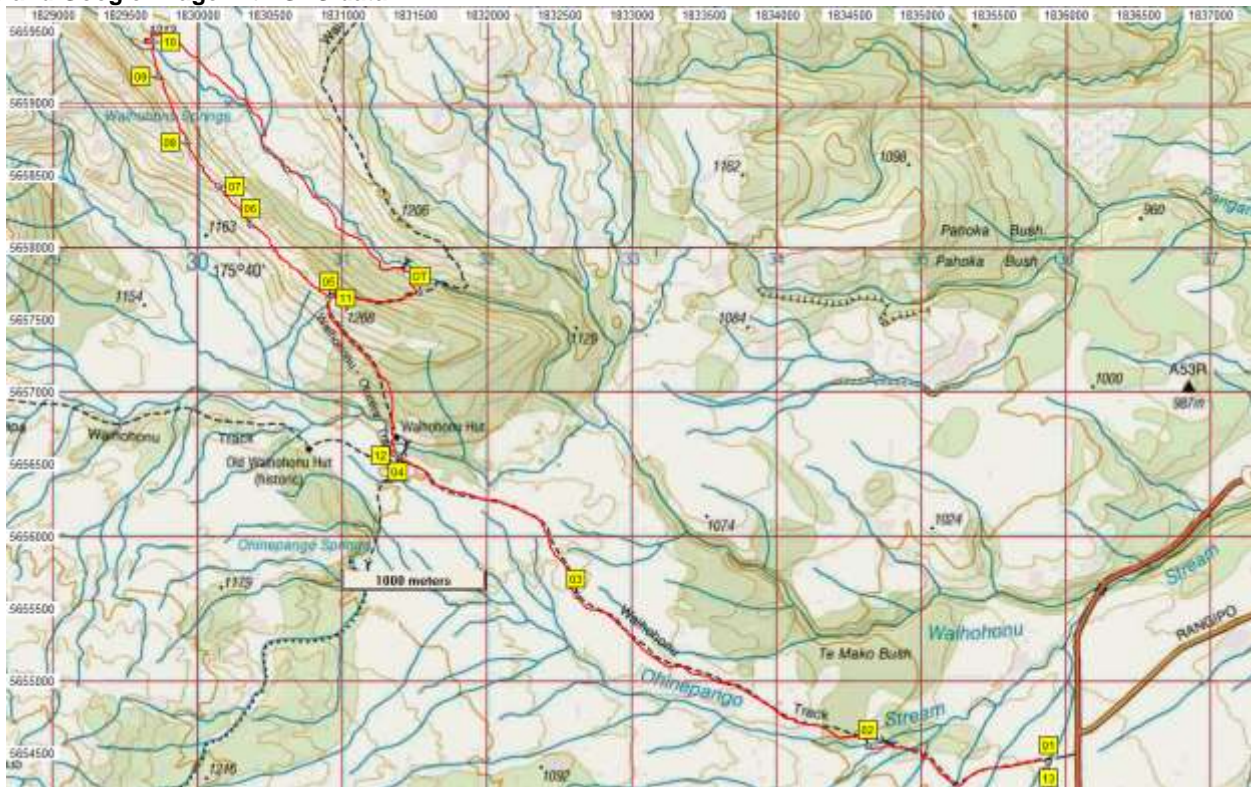
Slightly more adventure can be had by heading up and over the small hill above the springs to get on to the true left bank of the Waihohonu stream-line and heading downstream. Most of the walking is easy as it is mainly gravel fan but there is a lot of bog and several stream lines to cross. At some point, see map, cross to the true right bank and continue - but the going does get a bit rough in places till eventually there is little option but to head, steeply uphill to the right.

This is hard work being fairly steep in woodland but quite soon the Oturere track (**WP0T**<sup>1131masl</sup>) is intercepted – head uphill to the right (W) on this. From here it is about 20 minutes downhill to Waihohonu Hut (**WP16**<sup>1112masl</sup>) via the new metal bridge just past the campsite in the valley.





## Map and Google Image with GPS data



N...	East	North	Alt(m)	Description
01	1835882	5654442	985	Carpark off SH1 Desert Road
02	1834634	5654552	997	1.48km (22min); Bridge over Ohinepango Stream
03	1832613	5655593	1088	3.9km (1:00min); Tongariro National Park sign
04	1831385	5656567	1108	5.55km (1:21min); Waihohehu Hut, smoko
05	1830908	5657656	1265	6.92km (2:21min); Turn off Oturere Track heading NW on ridge
06	1830364	5658163	1256	7.68km (2:39min); Very big rock
07	1830141	5658429	1263	8.05km (2:47min); Close to huge rock
08	1829926	5658733	1268	8.43km (2:58min); Big boulders
09	1829730	5659190	1213	8.94km (3:14min); Lone tree on NNW side
10	1829692	5659430	1191	9.19km (3:24min); Springs at lava flow toe
11	1830909	5657654	1260	12.1km (5:13min); Back at Oturere track junction
12	1831382	5656567	1112	13.4km (5:50min); Back at Waihohehu Hut
13	1835883	5654445	985	18.94km (7:06min); Back at van near Desert Road
OT	1831532	5657690	1131	4:15-4:45min - Oturere Track 3.7km from Springs via Waihohehu Stream

**Notes:** GPS Garmin GPSMap 62sc  
 WP Waypoint as taken by GPS unit  
 masl metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS unit and may not agree exactly with map spot heights)