

WAIONE TRAM Mountain Bike Track Loop

260 Series Map: Raurimu, S19

Topo50 Map: BG34 Piropiro

How to get to START: Exit Taupo northwards on SH1, turn off just outside town left on to Poihipi Road, then turn left to Whangamata Road and go straight through to meet SH32:

- Turn right on to SH32 northwards
- At Whakamaru turn left (NW) on SH30
- In 3km bear left still on SH30 Mitchell Road
- Two km further on turn left (SW) on Scott Road, still SH30
- At Barryville pass entrance on left to Pureora Information Centre, carry on through Benneydale on SH30
- South of Benneydale go left to Waimiha Road
- Left off Waimiha Road signed to Pureora Forest Park
- Asphalt to gravel road going straight at junction
- Piropiro Flats campsite

It is possible to park and walk from here (**WT01**) or, if it is preferred, park at the end of the motorable track (**WT03**) passing the junction to the Totara Stream (**WT02**) on the way. One advantage of starting at WP01 is that it allows some time to “warm-up” before tackling the grinding Pan-handle ascent.

Rough description: This is a hard / fit 1 day or a moderate 2 day tramp covering between 25 and 30km depending on the actual starting point. Tenting is inevitable as there is no convenient hut on the route, which is advertised as a 25km mountain bike track. Most maps do not show any tracks in the area but some are shown on certain older maps and DoC have put up track markers in critical places – but not in sufficient number. Most of the walking is on good, often quad bike, tracks and there are 2 river crossings plus the odd pretty severe grunt.

Day 1: Piropiro Flats (WT01) to Waione Stream Camp (WT20) covering 12.6km, altitude ranging from 393 to 616 metres and taking about 5 hours including refreshment stops.

From the Piropiro Flats (**WT01** 437masl), which is 124km from Taupo using the short-cut off Link Road from SH32 to SH30, head almost due south on the motorable track passing Totara Tree Road (**WT02**) in 10 minutes. The end of the motor track (**WT03**) is reached in 30 minutes where the route goes left up the Panhandle which is a steep, degraded track.

Punga face



There are fair views from the crest (**WT04** 511masl) reached in 15min and the exposed rocky surface makes a good spot for smoko. From here the track is in good condition and easy to follow: a Y-fork (**WT05** 455masl) is reached within 70min where the route goes left and winds its way downhill to the river. Just before reaching the stream line there are several very clear faces (**WT06** 401masl) carved in the Punga!

Crossing the Maramataha River (**WT07** 394masl) must be treated with caution as it is thigh to waist deep with a strong current but there is a single strand steel rope. In the past there has been a “barge” attached to the rope for getting mountain bikes over. Also, a large plank can be found on the stream bank and it is assumed that this could be set up as a bridge in summertime when river level falls. A long ascent, quite steep in places, follows up through absolutely wonderful forest.

A small clearing with a bike track marker is reached (**WT08** 510masl) then there are a couple of wind-fall bypasses and in around 2:15min a flat area (**WT09** 528masl) is found – partially flooded with many young Rimu and several forest giants - some dead - noticeable. Just on 2:30min there is a semi-open area at a bend in the track (**WT10** 577masl) just before a huge Rata off to the left.

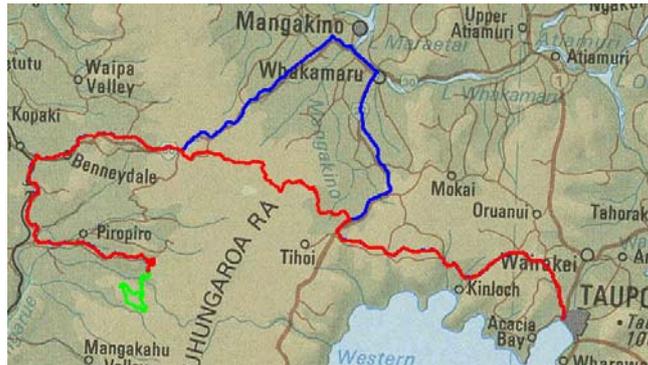
A small spur track to the right leads to a possible mini-camp site (**WT11** 590masl) within an area of Manuka, or is it Kanuka? Less than one minute from here a track junction (**WT12** 581masl) is met. Going left leads to a bivouac in about one minute or 3 hours total. This is the site of the Rat or White Hut and offers four bunks, a sink, a source of heating and an outside long-drop dunny upslope opposite the front door. Less than a minute down a small track to the right of the door there is a stream line with a pool plus pipe for water supply. This place is considered to be the Waione Hilton.

Take the right branch from WT12 and head uphill through the heavily vegetated area with a lot of Toitoi to reach a Y-fork (**WT13** 597masl) with no information boards or track markers. This is the start of the “Loop Track” so go to the left; in five minutes go right at the next Y-junction (**WT14** 616masl) as the track looks better. In fact the track is poor, there are several clearings, there are a few track-markers but, overall, this is a boring bit of bush with swampy areas that goes on forever SE.

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access and tramp Line



The shortest access is the red line using a massive shortcut from SH32 to SH30 on gravel roads through Pureora Forest on Link Road. The blue line is longer via Whakamaru but on sealed asphalt highway. The tramp route is the green line. Drive time from Taupo using either route is about 2hour 30min.

River crossing



Flow is swift and can be deep

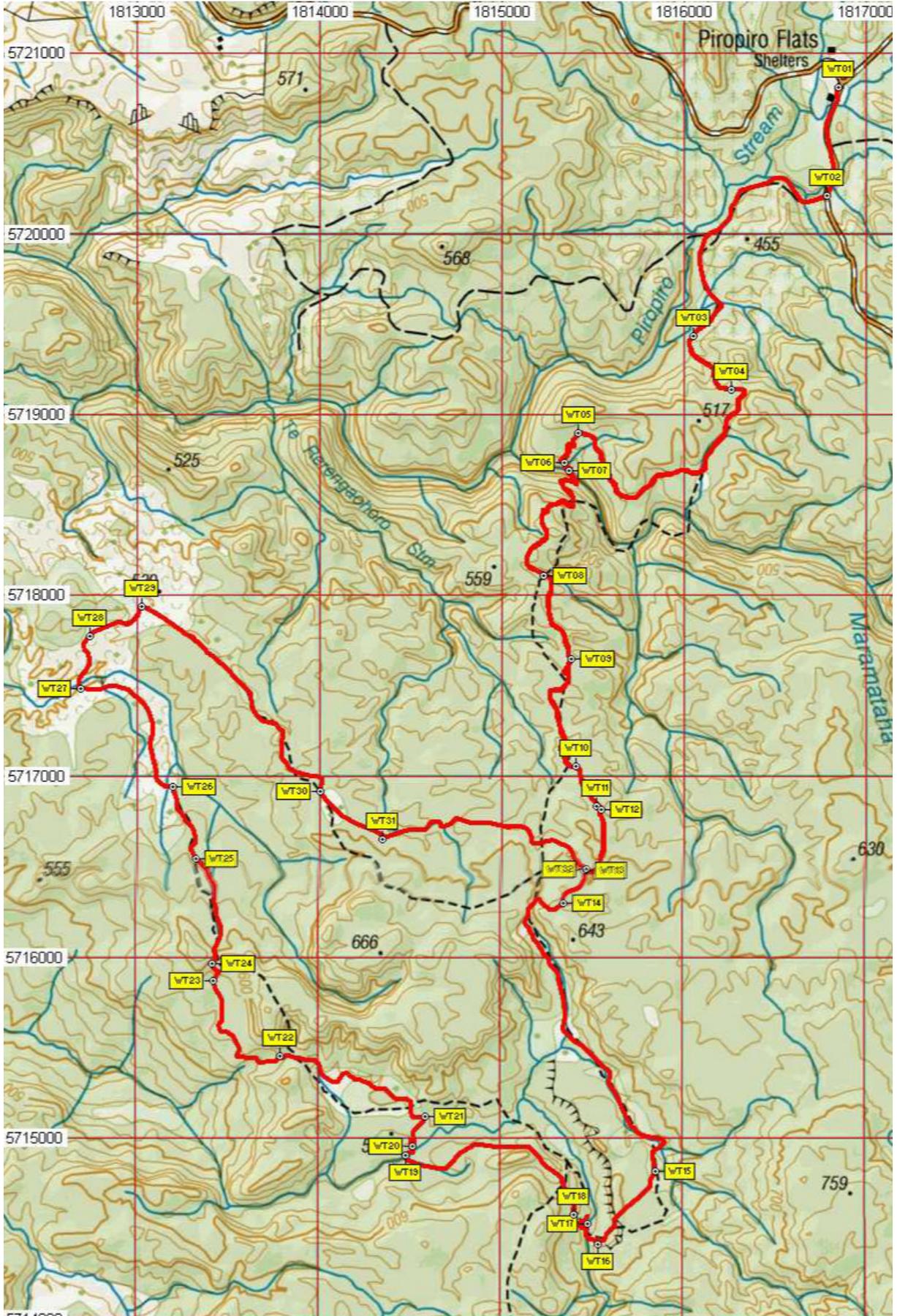
Giant Rata



Waione Hilton Hotel



Map with GPS data



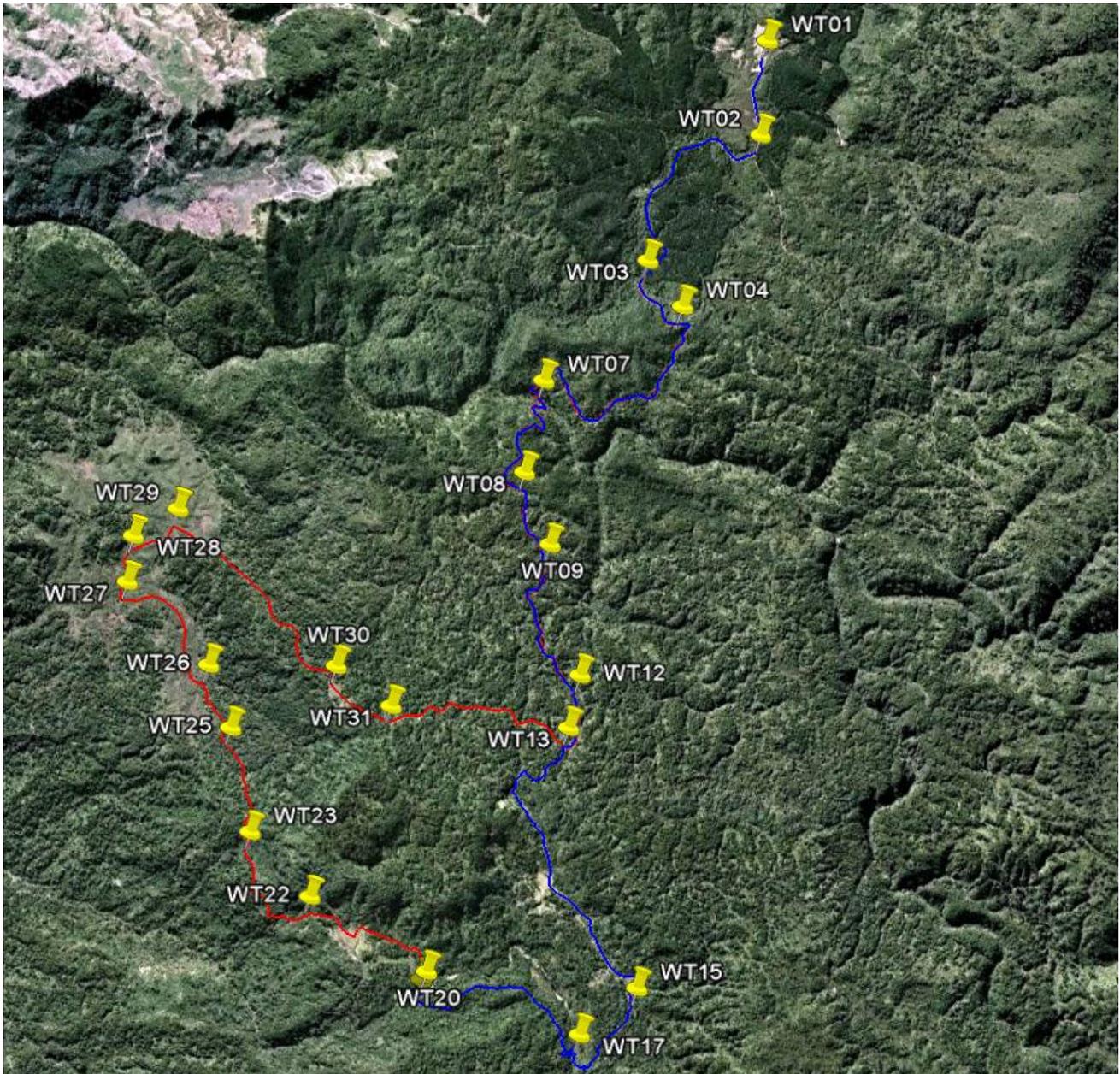
Day 1



Day 2



Google image with GPS data



Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
WT01	2726963	6282447	437	SW end of Piropiro Flats
WT02	2726902	6281849	437	10min; Totara Stream junction, go right at this Y-fork
WT03	2726165	6281072	420	30min; End of motorable track & start of Panhandle ascent
WT04	2726376	6280775	511	41min; Rocky crest of Panhandle after 15 minute grunty ascent
WT05	2725536	6280540	455	1:10min; T-junction, bear right downhill towards Maramataha River
WT06	2725459	6280374	401	1:20min; Great "Punga" faces on left and right during descent
WT07	2725485	6280330	394	1:24min; Edge of Maramataha River for single-wire-aided crossing
WT08	2725346	6279750	510	1:50min; Open area with bike track marker post
WT09	2725494	6279288	528	2:15min; Flat flooded area with many young Rimu and some dead forest giants
WT10	2725522	6278693	577	2:30min; Slightly open with bend in track just before huge Rata on left
WT11	2725636	6278473	590	2:55min; Mini camp site on right with huge fallen tree in Manuka area on high point
WT12	2725661	6278452	581	3 hours; T-junction with quad track to right and left for Hilton (Rat or White Bivvy)
WT13	2725580	6278121	597	3:20min; Y-fork at start of Loop Track - go left and uphill
WT14	2725464	6277941	616	3:25min; Y-fork, go RIGHT as left looks less used
WT15	2725965	6276454	585	4:25min; Y-fork in open bush area - right is more distinct track
WT16	2725651	6276057	575	4:40min; High point before steep descent with old campsite (frying pan) on LHS near Tawa tree
WT17	2725593	6276169	558	4:50min; Cross Waione River with orange triangle markers - go left after crossing and uphill
WT18	2725517	6276220	574	5 hours; Steeply up pumice slope and RIGHT at T-junction (Left for Hauhungaroa)
WT19	2724599	6276550	541	5:20min; Nice forest with clear markers to river crossing
WT20	2724634	6276597	498	Campsite with space for 5 - 6 tents on North Bank of Waione Stream
WT21	2724706	6276762	561	5min from camp; Steep ascent to T-junction, go left on good track then big clearing
WT22	2723908	6277095	561	30min; Possible campsite then a steep eroded descent plus old triangular track marker
WT23	2723542	6277516	573	45min; Y-fork, go right on Bike Notice in super forest and wind uphill
WT24	2723536	6277612	592	50min; Meet track from left at Y-junction then more ascending to large orange triangular marker
WT25	2723437	6278181	560	1:05min; Giant Rata on left hand side
WT26	2723309	6278584	530	1:15min; Small clearing just big enough to camp with small stream 50m on. Then open area.
WT27	2722807	6279125	511	1:30min; Y-fork with plastic marker plus bike post going right. Left is 1.2km to hut + water
WT28	2722854	6279417	511	1:40min; Well flagged Irish bridge over gully
WT29	2723142	6279580	530	1:50min; Y-junction with deer horns. Go right on over-grown track, bit muddy and cut-up in parts
WT30	2724117	6278554	589	2:35min; Marker post at start of large meadow. Another post showing exit.
WT31	2724457	6278290	587	2:45min; Vague track off right in undulating to rolling forest
WT32	2725579	6278124	598	3 hours; Back at WT13 - start / end of Loop Track. Go left for 2:30 to reach end of motor track WT03

NZTM

Easting	Northing
1816832	5720541
1816772	5719943
1816035	5719164
1816247	5718867
1815406	5718631
1815329	5718466
1815355	5718422
1815217	5717841
1815365	5717378
1815395	5716783
1815509	5716564
1815533	5716543
1815453	5716211
1815337	5716031
1815840	5714544
1815526	5714146
1815467	5714259
1815391	5714310
1814473	5714639
1814508	5714686
1814580	5714951
1813781	5715183
1813414	5715604
1813409	5715701
1813309	5716270
1813181	5716672
1812678	5717213
1812725	5717505
1813012	5717668
1813989	5716644
1814329	5716379
1815452	5716214

After around 4:30min there is yet another unmarked Y-fork (**WT15** 585masl) in one of the open areas and the route is to the right (heading SW). The track soon improves and is quite distinct. Fifteen minutes later there is a distinct high point (**WT16** 575masl) before a steep descent within a deeply incised channel – there is an old campsite, complete with a frying pan, to the left of the track and near a Tawa tree. At the bottom cross the Waione River (**WT17** 558masl) at a clearly marked (large orange triangles) point and go left, uphill. This becomes steep near the top and is on loose pumice then go right at the (**WT18** 574masl) T-junction – left is for Hauhungaroa. For the next 20 minutes the route goes through very pleasant forest with clear markers to a river crossing (**WT19** 541masl). There is a good campsite (**WT20**) with space for several tents on the north bank of the Waione after this crossing.

Camp-site



Day 2: From the Waione River camp site (**WT20**) – to the Road end (**WT03**). Completes the loop which ends near the “Hilton” (**WT12**) then exits on the same track as used for the entry on Day 1, covers 14.2km, with basically the same altitude range of just over 211 metres and takes nearer 6 hours.

Large cabbage tree



Head uphill due N from the camp-site and within 5 minutes go left at a T-junction (**WT21** 561masl) on good track and soon come to a large clearing with several large tree stumps visible. Continue uphill with a stream line running parallel on the RHS and just over the crest there is another possible campsite (**WT22** 561masl) before the descent becomes steeper and the track a bit eroded – there is an old orange track marker on this section.

At the stream crossing at the bottom of this slope there appears to be a bit of a cave in the stream bed on the RHS. Within 45 minutes go right at a Y-fork (**WT23** 573masl) with a clear “bike” marker – this is in superb forest with good bird-life as the route winds uphill. Five minutes later a track joins (**WT24** 592masl) from the left then there is more ascent to a large orange track marker. A giant Rata can be seen on the left after one hour or so then in 1:15min there is a small clearing just large enough for a tent or two (**WT26** 530masl) with a small stream as water supply 50m or so further on. Soon there is yet another open area with huge cabbage trees, Toitoi and many blackberries.

In around 1:30min go right to head NE at a fork (**WT27** 511masl) with plastic markers plus a bike post; there is a hut with water supply about 1.2km down the left branch. Ten minutes later there is a well-flagged Irish Bridge (**WT28** 511masl) over a gully – this was built by local hunters said to be policemen from Te Kuiti. Another 90 degree change in direction is needed at the next junction (**WT29** 530masl) to head SE on a track with deer horns on the track marker post – this track is a bit overgrown, muddy and cut-up in places but generally pretty good.

A very large meadow is crossed after about 90 minutes and there are clear markers at the entry (**WT30** 589masl) and exit; again there are several very large cabbage trees. Ten minutes later whilst within rolling forest there is a vague track going off right (**WT31** 587masl). From here it is an easy stroll for 10 to 15 minutes back to meet the start of the “Loop” track (**WT32** / **WT13** 598masl) from where the route returns to the junction close to the Waione Hilton then back out the same track as used for entry on Day 1.

It was felt that this track, as it is presently maintained and marked, is not to be recommended to bikers, or even some trampers, as there is every chance of people getting lost if good navigational skills are not available in the party. Also the initial river crossing at WP07 can be dangerous and this river can rise dangerously fast after rain.

Notes:

- **GPS** GPSmap 60CSx
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level