

OKATAINA WALKWAY WEST

260 Series Map: Rotorua, U16

Topo50 Map: BE37 Rotorua & BE38 Lake Rotoma

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo on SH 1 North
- At Wairakei follow SH 5 to Rotorua
- Enter Rotorua and at roundabout follow SH30 to Whakatane
- At traffic lights go right on SH30 to Whakatane, next roundabout go straight on
- Traffic lights go straight on SH 30, over mini-roundabout, pass Rotorua Airport
- At Te Ngae go right on SH 30 to Whakatane and pass "Hell's Gate" thermal area
- Pass Curtiss Road on the left, about 1.5km later enter Hapaurau Bay
- Park in car park (**WW01**) on right signposted West Okataina Walkway this is about 1km before the turn-off to Lake Okataina Road

Total driving time is 1:20min to reach the start and the route from Taupo is indicated on the map on the right as the heavier red line. The tramp route is the part between WW01 and WW25 whilst the part west from WW25 is the exit route starting on Millar Road.

Rough description: A long tramp of over 21km requiring 6–7 hours with three noticeable uphill sections and overall 897metres of ascent. Distance-wise this is a moderate+ walk but there are no tricky or technical bits and the whole way is on a well formed, wide track that must have been a road in the past and is now an MTB cycleway. Take someone along to talk to as there are no views as such, apart from ferns and trees, though there is a glimpse of Lake Okataina at one point.

Detail: Quite a long drive to and from Taupo and a driver / transport mover is required for this A to B walk. The start is easily visible from SH30 NE of Rotorua and, from the small car park (**01302masl**), the start is a 10 minute brutal ascent – so go easy to warm up. Once up the first slope there is an area with some gorse, many birds and you pass under a power line then meet a small junction (**02402masl**). Be aware, especially early on, as there are a lot of junctions and taking the wrong one will end up on Lake Okataina Road or at Lake Okataina. One such junction comes up after 50 minutes where the track heads downhill via an eroded stream line and where there is poor GPS reception.

Soon there is an open area or amphitheatre named the "Bull Ring" (**05356masl**) and a climb is required to get up out of here so go "slow and steady" looking at and following the several signs at the various junctions noted. After an hour go right at the Y-junction (**06377masl**) on the Rongomai Track followed by a steep zig-zagging ascent. One of the noticeable features of the forest here is the size of the tree ferns – they are huge. Next feature is the sign Okataina at a T-junction (**07422masl**) where the route goes right then stay straight at the next T-junction (**08431masl**) where the Te Auheka Track goes off. Within 2 hours the open area with buildings of the Okataina Outdoor Education Centre is reached – this is a good place to stop off for a refreshment break.

Giant tree ferns



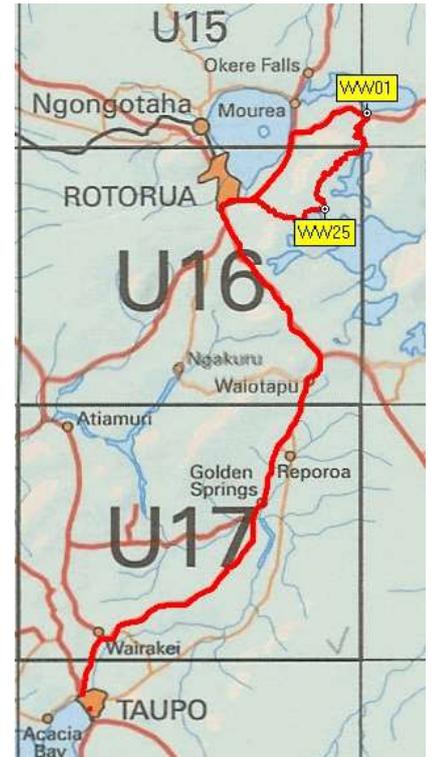
Leave the outdoor centre area passing through the archway (**09429masl**) with informative notices following a wide grass track noting the 2 junctions that occur within 10 minutes (**10 & 11**). For the next 30–40 minutes there is an uphill grunt with an easier section (**12580masl**) after 20min and then after more hard work and in 3:15min there is an awesome dead Rata in the sky above (**15707masl**). It is just before the turn-off to the Whakapoungakau trig the tri (**15b758masl**) which offers little in the way of views when the cloud is down but good ones on a clear day (the side trip takes 30–40min). An open meadow then suggests itself as a lunch spot (**16692masl**). As they say "it is all mostly downhill from here on" with very few notable features.

Awesome Rata



One feature that cannot be missed is signposted for the bikers, but still pay attention as the stream line – the second branch of the Rereoterangi - (**17482masl**) in question can be tricky to cross since the logs can be slippery when wet. There are a couple of small incised stream lines and a wooden bridge (**19456masl**) plus several very useful white plastic posts with kilometres-to-go clearly marked – the first being at 7km (**18490masl**). Just past the 6km post (**20466masl**) the track is on a wide shelf above a deep valley on your right then it bends to the left and goes uphill with grassy, bare-looking hills on the right.

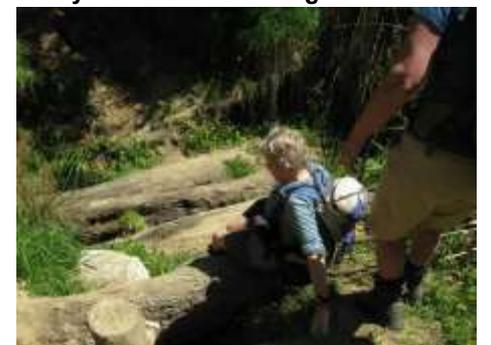
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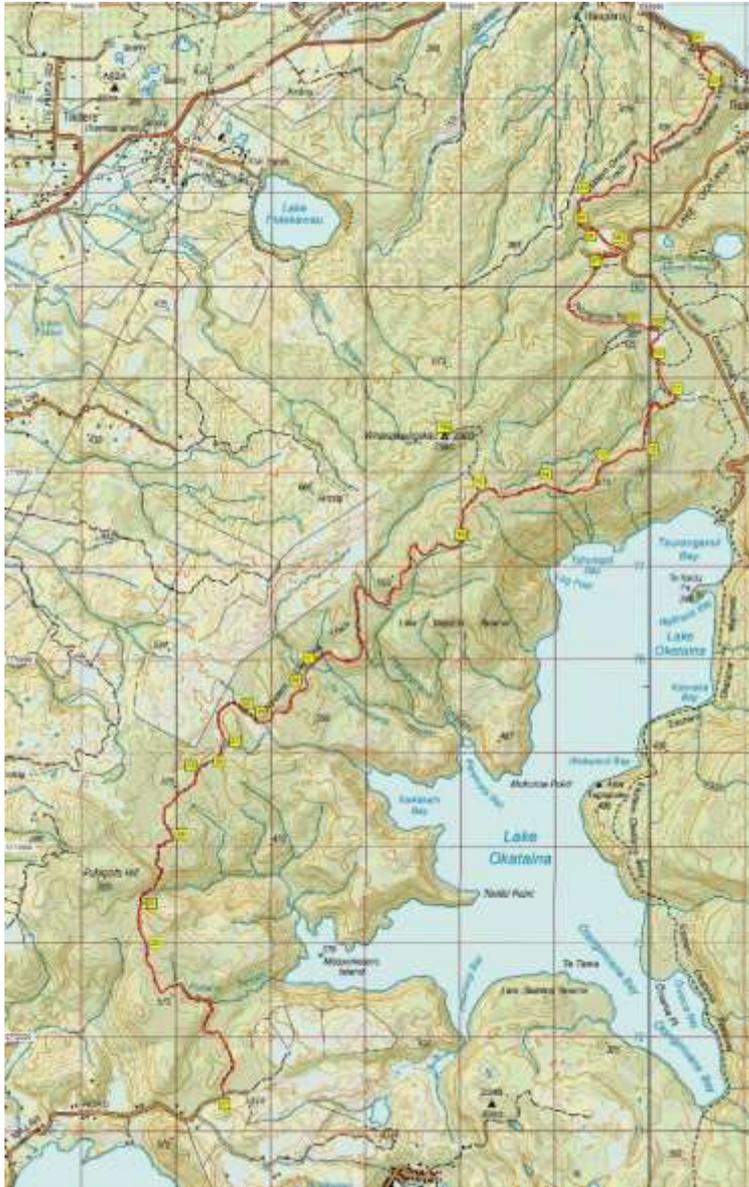
Notice board at outdoor centre



Tricky streamline crossing



Map and Google Image with GPS data



Cross a small stream (21470masl) then on the wide open track pass through more good forest plus ferns. The 5km post (22487masl) is on an uphill, then there is a minor junction (23504masl) on the right. The track is a bit eroded and the 4km post (24528masl) is near the crest of a long eroded slope then it is a bit wet and soggy underfoot and a deep valley lies to the left.

There is deep forest litter on the track at the 3km post (25568masl) which comes up at about 5:50min from the start. There is a Y-fork (26556masl) where the route goes right and 20 minutes later there is an open flat area heading for the car park on Millar Road (27466masl). The post at 2km was missed as was the one at 1km. On the most recent outing the marker posts were not as easily found.

Awesome tree near trig junction



From : 07-Nov-12 08:55:52
 To : 07-Nov-12 15:08:09
 Time taken : 6:32:17
 Total Distance : 23.600 km
 Minimum Speed : 0.000 KPH
 Maximum Speed : 5.115 KPH
 Average Speed : 3.304 KPH
 Minimum Altitude : 301 Meters
 Maximum Altitude : 737 Meters



Trig station



The Trig station has a large communications mast and control hut with explanatory notices.

GPS Data and NZTM Waypoints



| Name | Easting | Northing | Alt(m) | Description |
|------|---------|----------|--------|---|
| 01 | 1900497 | 5782541 | 302 | Car park on SH30 southern edge of Lake Totoiti |
| 02 | 1900675 | 5782081 | 420 | 15min (0.6km); small track junction soon after slope eases at top of brutal uphill start. Head SW |
| 03 | 1899293 | 5780947 | 455 | 50min (2.93km); on narrow ridge at small track junction, go left and downhill |
| 04 | 1899282 | 5780630 | 395 | 60min (3.49km); in eroded stream line area with very poor GPS signal heading SE |
| 05 | 1899470 | 5780538 | 356 | 1:05min (3.74km); In the middle of "Bull Ring", quite heavily overgrown |
| 06 | 1899658 | 5780412 | 377 | 1:10min (4.29km); Y-fork, go right for Education Camp |
| 07 | 1899418 | 5780166 | 422 | 1:25min (4.75km); junction signposted for Okataina, right for Education Centre |
| 08 | 1899809 | 5779567 | 431 | 1:46min (6.08km); Te Auheka track goes off to right |
| 09 | 1900090 | 5779505 | 429 | 1:55min (6.41km); archway on lower edge of Education Centre compound, track notices and info boards |
| 10 | 1900099 | 5779156 | 414 | 2:10min (6.83km); T-junction, head straight ahead to the south |
| 11 | 1900289 | 5778776 | 425 | 2:15min (7.28km); T-junction, turn right and start gentle ascent |
| 12 | 1899934 | 5778249 | 580 | 2:35min (8.18km); at minor crest after long (20min) grunt up hill |
| 13 | 1899504 | 5778075 | 601 | 2:40min (8.62km); almost level section on fairly narrow ridge |
| 14 | 1898904 | 5777868 | 695 | 3hours (9.43km); level area after another hefty grunt uphill |
| 15 | 1898197 | 5777790 | 707 | 3:15min (10.22km); Whakapoungakau Trig junction beneath awesome dead Rata |
| 15b | 1897839 | 5778373 | 758 | 3:40min (11.44km); Whakapoungakau Trig 15 - 20 min uphill from junction (If you go) |
| 16 | 1898007 | 5777233 | 692 | 3:45min (10.99km); small grassy meadow area (Distance if you miss out the Trig) |
| 17 | 1896398 | 5775913 | 482 | 4:40min (14.39km); tricky stream crossing of second branch of Te Rereoterangi Stream on logs |
| 18 | 1896369 | 5775782 | 490 | 4:45min (14.54km); 7km to go marker post on RHS of track |
| 19 | 1895894 | 5775336 | 456 | 4:55min (15.34km); small wooden bridge |
| 20 | 1895750 | 5775419 | 466 | 4:57min (15.52km); 6km to go marker post |
| 21 | 1895511 | 5775133 | 470 | 5:02min (16.23km); small stream line |
| 22 | 1895343 | 5774911 | 487 | 5:12min (16.53km); 5km to go marker on upslope section |
| 23 | 1895257 | 5774869 | 504 | 5:14min (16.63km); small junction off right, continue straight to the SW |
| 24 | 1894939 | 5774142 | 528 | 5:27min (17.54km); 4km marker on section liable to being boggy |
| 25 | 1894631 | 5773428 | 568 | 5:51min (18.69km); 3km to go marker damp area of forest |
| 26 | 1894679 | 5773004 | 556 | 5:57min (19.05km); Y-fork, go to right to enter open grassy area in 20min or so |
| 27 | 1895507 | 5771394 | 466 | 6:33min (21.60km); end of track car park on Millar Road 2km NE of Lake Okareka |

Halfway



Nearly there



If variations are wanted then there are alternatives:

- Start at the top of the track and include the 2.4km diversion to the Trig – this gives a more challenging 24km
- Start at the top of the track and miss out the 2.4km diversion to the Trig – this is the 21.6km option
- Start at the Education Centre (there is good road access of Lake Okataina Road) and include the Trig giving almost 19km
- Start at the Education Centre and miss out the Trig giving just over 16km or 10 miles

Notes:

- **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 60CSx / GPSMap 62sc
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level