

WAIHAHA HUT via WAIHAHA RIVER

260 Series Map: Kuratau, T18

Topo50 Map: BG34 Piropiro & BG35 Tihoi

How to get to START - Exit Taupo on **SH1** North.

- Near the top of the hill go left to **Poihipi Road**
- Follow the road then left to **Whangamata Road** following the signs for Kinloch
- Do **NOT** turn left for Kinloch but go straight ahead till you reach a T-junction
- At the T-junction to **SH32** turn left and proceed for about 10km
- 2km south of the junction to Waihaha Road cross bridge on the Waihaha River
- Immediately on crossing the bridge turn left into the **Scenic Reserve Car Park**

From the car park walk back to the main road and cross, taking great care as this is a dangerous very fast road, then walk back up over the bridge where you will find access to the **Waihaha Track** on the left.

Rough description: A fairly hard, long (25+km) 7–8 hour out and back trip from SH32 parallel to the Waihaha River to 45-60 minutes beyond the Waihaha Hut on the Hauhungaroa track. There is a bit of climbing involved – about 500 metres (GPS) gain / loss, the path is good in most parts, with a few recent tweaks for bikes and passes many fishing spots.

The trip in seems to take longer than the return but this is mainly due to the fact that everyone stops to check or identify the luxurious vegetation and check out the promising looking fishing spots. Less ambitious trampers can turn round at any point but most make it to the Waihaha Hut. Take note that it is 10km to the hut not 9 as stated on the DoC sign

Detail: On leaving the Waihaha Scenic Reserve car park (**WP1477 masl**) turn right, northwards, on SH32 over the Waihaha River bridge then immediately turn left (**WP2474 masl**) on to the track. The track goes NW for about 10 minutes then there is a bend which follows the course of the river and you head WSW and start ascending. You are now in an attractive V-shaped valley, then there are some steps down and a track on the left leads to a good trout fishing spot. After 40 minutes cross a swing bridge (**WP5483 masl**) over the Mangatu Stream then ascend some zig-zags.

The track is less good and it is a longish ascent which reaches a “look-out” rock (**WP7551 masl**) on the right hand side with views of Ruapehu. The track then improves as it continues up along a ridge still in the forest basically heading in a westerly direction

View from WP08 spur track



Pass a small branch path on the left, this soon re-joins and gives access to other views, then an undulating descent starts (**WP9581 masl**) and what used to be open, grassy clearing (**WP10541 masl**) is reached. This “clearing” is now populated by 2m high scrubby bush. A short, out-and-back diversion from here is worth doing as it leads to a spot where good drinking water can be obtained. A small track, indistinct in places, goes off right (NNW) leading through the wide grassy meadow area, passes through a well-used camp site, goes downhill then swings round to the right into forest and uphill.

A small cliff with a water dripping off the mosses into a small pool is the target (**WPH20 546masl**). Back on the main track a slightly muddy section is encountered about 20 minutes beyond **WP10** where there are views of the river, some rapids and a large “ponded” river section just before another open grassy area, which suggests itself as a campsite (**WP12 528 masl**) but be aware that high river flow / floods can sweep through here.

In another 5 minutes the route ascends out of bush into beech then mature broadleaf forest. In a total time around of 2:30 minutes there is an open area with an indistinct junction (**WP14 565masl**) with the left branch leading to a view point above the river gorge and where the river virtually goes under-ground (**WP1556 masl**). There are one or two other very small tracks heading steeply downhill, southwards and most give some view of the river gorge and circular pools scoured in limestone.

Continuing on the main path in a north westerly direction an “enchanted”, mossy forest with Rimu and other forest giants is reached in just under 3 hours then the path heads south west and the Waihaha Hut is reached in plus or minus 3 hours (**WP22 577 masl**) – all depending on age, speed and whether the views or study of the vegetation slows progress.

The Waihaha Hut is in a very pleasant spot and is neat and tidy inside with a wood-burner for comfort – some wood is stored at the door with more behind the hut. There are clear sign posts all around the hut indicating where the various paths go and there is a good dipping, if not swimming, area directly below the hut. The return path is the one you came on and is inscribed Western Bays Road and there are just over 10km to cover back to the main road where the tramp started. From the hut the route northwards is described in the tramp “*Waihora via Waihaha*” whilst the route westwards can be followed a long way but details have been recorded for only another 3km – these details are shown in the waypoints with the map.

To continue from the Hut head south then westwards on the Hauhungaroa Route which follows close to the peaceful looking river through very pleasant forest on a fairly good, level track. The only slight effort being an incised, eroded stream crossing (**WP23591masl**) followed soon after by a short steep ascent up a bank to a well-nigh perfect picnic spot. Within about 3:30 minutes a

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access



- Road access is bright red
- Tramp is the blue line

Cold July outing



Waihaha hut



small meadow (**WP24** 610masl) with a stone-surrounded fire-place is reached – this looks like a fairly nice camping spot. The going gets slightly more difficult from here due to recent windfalls within an incised stream crossing (**WP25** 604masl).

Map and Google Image with GPS data



| N | Easting | Northing | Alt | Description |
|-----|---------|----------|-----|---|
| 01 | 1833312 | 5713062 | 477 | Waihaha Scenic Reserve car park on E side of SH32. Walk to road head North |
| 02 | 1833304 | 5713130 | 474 | Turn left off SH32 just north of bridge over Waihaha 5 min from car park |
| 03 | 1832835 | 5713541 | 476 | 10-14min (0.9km); bend in path parallel to river; start ascending |
| 04 | 1832121 | 5713397 | 490 | 25-28min (1.77km); V-shaped valley with steps down then trout track on LHS |
| 05 | 1831721 | 5713338 | 483 | 35-40min (2.3km); swing bridge then right and up zig-zags |
| 06 | 1831380 | 5713517 | 527 | 45-50min (2.75km); longish ascent on less good track |
| 07 | 1831320 | 5713507 | 551 | 48-52min (2.81km); look-out rock with Ruapehu + views then along ridge |
| 08 | 1831214 | 5713443 | 571 | 1hour (2.99km); small branch path to open area on left, runs parallel and rejoins |
| 09 | 1830876 | 5713480 | 581 | 1:07min 3.39km); start undulating descent |
| 10 | 1829723 | 5713536 | 541 | 1:33min (4.75km); open area with low bush - good smoko / tea stop |
| 11 | 1828491 | 5713478 | 528 | 2:06min (6.19km); close to river on muddy section then river views, rapids and pond |
| 12 | 1828237 | 5713329 | 528 | 2:12min (6.52km); open grassy area, fisherman's campsite? |
| 13 | 1827820 | 5713449 | 542 | Ascending and passing from bush to beech then mature native forest |
| 14 | 1827410 | 5713303 | 565 | 2:32min (7.58km); more open, out of forest and T-junction left to views of rock pools and gorge |
| 15 | 1827424 | 5713273 | 561 | Flat rocky view point of river and circular pools 3 - 4min down rough track |
| 16 | 1827448 | 5713281 | 556 | View point above gorge where river goes underground 1min S off main track |
| 17 | 1827360 | 5713217 | 573 | 2:34min (7.69); Small indistinct track junction heading S towards river |
| 18 | 1827374 | 5713211 | 568 | Good view of rock pools and river down very small track 50m S of main track |
| 19 | 1827219 | 5713377 | 573 | 2:39min (7.96km); small indistinct track heading S down to river |
| 20 | 1827027 | 5714076 | 569 | 2:55min (8.86km); mature forest with Rimu and other huge native trees |
| 21 | 1826200 | 5713864 | 587 | 3:00-3:15min (10.02km); DoC Toilet at edge of Waihaha clearing |
| 22 | 1826182 | 5713867 | 577 | 3:01-3:16min (10.03km); Waihaha Hut with paths to west and north on Hauhungaroa track |
| 23 | 1825262 | 5713548 | 591 | 3:35min; stream crossing with eroded lower slopes |
| 24 | 1824418 | 5713050 | 610 | 3:55min; meadow , suitable lunch spot and camp site with stones for fire |
| 25 | 1824330 | 5712955 | 604 | 4:05min; steep, eroded lower slope to stream partially blocked with windfall |
| H2O | 1829900 | 5713702 | 551 | Good water supply point below low cliff |



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| Notes: | • GPS GPSmap 60CSx | <i>Updated July 2018</i> |
| | • WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit | |
| | • masl = metres above sea level | |