

## PINNACLES HUT & BILLY GOAT TRACK

260 Series Map: T12 Thames

Top50 Map: BB35 Hikuai

**How to get to START:** As this is well outside the Taupo area the first step is to get up to the southern end of the Coromandel aiming for Thames. In Thames turn right at the Toyota site and follow the road up the Kauaeranga Valley for as far as one can drive to the car park (WP01156masl) at the end. On the way pass the Christian Camp, the DoC Office and the Kuaeranga Education camp which is about 7km up valley from the DoC information centre. From the car park continue outwards on the gravel road heading NE.

**Rough description:** Starting early enough plus a high level of fitness would allow this tramp to be completed as a day walk. Mortals are better off walking in to the Pinnacles Hut (**WP17592masl**) and after lunch going for a walk or run up to the actual Pinnacles (**WP21791masl**) then overnighting in the hut. Next day is a relaxing walk out via the Billy Goat Track which does have the odd steep section (**WP26389masl**) when a part of the old incliner railway is traversed. This area is full of history and artifacts including Dancing Camp Dam, Hydro Camp and Billy Goat Landing with an overall altitude gain of over 1000 metres over around 17kilometres.

The first part is on a very good gravel path then steeply upwards with many steps (rock staircases) and several swing bridges or stepping stone crossings to an almost level saddle and the Pinnacles Hut. Above the Hut – go without a back-pack and stick – as after a wet area at the start the going is quite steep then ladders and metal hoops where the hands must be free for climbing to get to the top platform with great views.

**Detail:** Follow the gravel road up-valley for 10min or so then branch left at (**WP02172masl**) just before the river to access a swing bridge used as a flood diversion. At 20mins branch uphill to the right following the Web Creek Track reaching a flood detour and second swing bridge in 33mins (**WP03203masl**) then start going up a rock staircase. A third flood detour is offered at about 45mins (**WP04273masl**) then continue upwards and get an open view down valley (**WP05315masl**) before crossing a wooden bridge (**WP06394masl**) after about an hour and yet another swing bridge flood detour (**WP07391masl**) several minutes later.

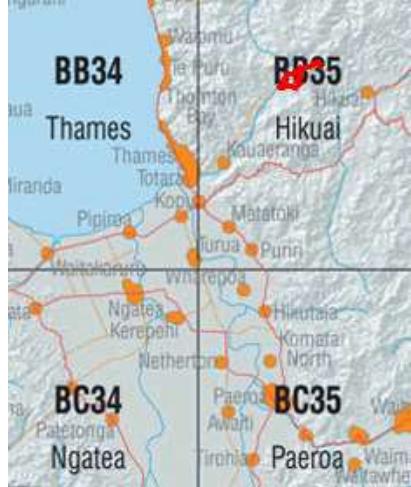
With altitude, views up-valley appear with some spectacular volcanic “plugs” and at 1:30mins there is a notice for “Condemned Creek” (**WP08512masl**). Minutes later go left at T-junction (**WP09524masl**) to use a wooden bridge flood detour and at the end of the detour go left – straight ahead here takes you to the site of the Hydro Camp (**WP10531masl**) and the turn off for the Billy Goat Track. During dry weather with low river flows it is usually quicker not to use the flood detour bridges.

It is now almost like a walk in the park on a “Roman Road” in places as some of the stone laid track is superb, the views are spectacular – see below - and information boards (**WP12577masl**) abound. There is a huge section of hollow tree on the right (**WP13561masl**) and walking is easy as the track is more or less level then there is notice board describing the skidded road that existed. A track junction indicates Moss Creek off left (**WP14607masl**), minutes later the helipad is found on the right (**WP15591masl**) then it is turn left (**WP16588masl**) off the main track to get on to some boarded walk and Pinnacles Hut (**WP17592masl**). This is a massive hut and sleeps 80. A small detour from here (5 mins each way) takes you to the Dancing Camp Dam (**WP18453masl**) which is still in recognisable order and there is an explanatory notice board. There is also a small pool here and can be used for ablutions if there is a water shortage at the hut.

NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

**Location and Access**



The tramping route in the middle of map BB35 east of Thames in the Coromandel

### Follow Web Creek Track

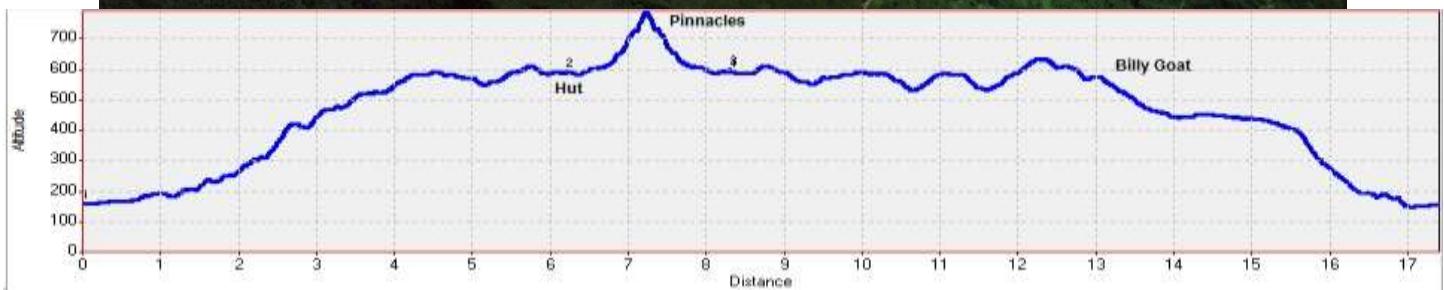
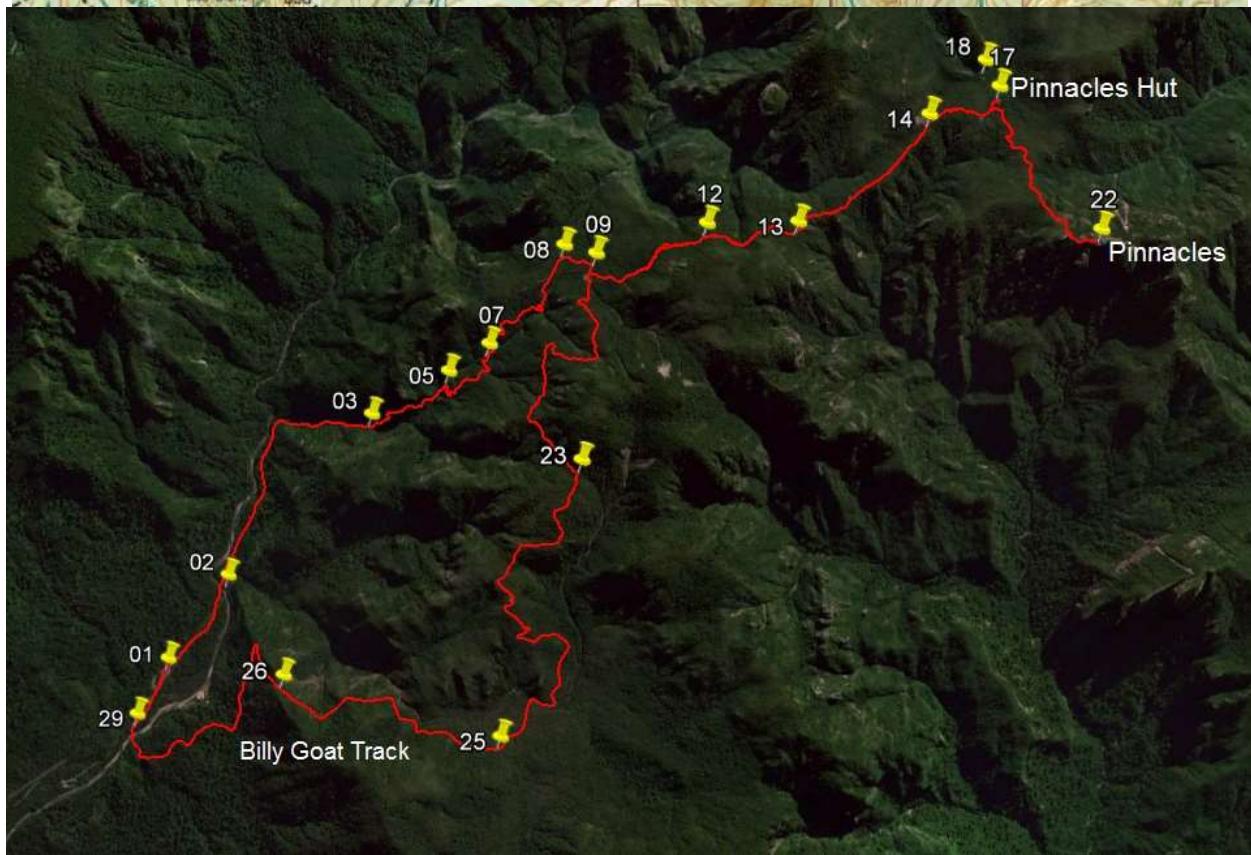
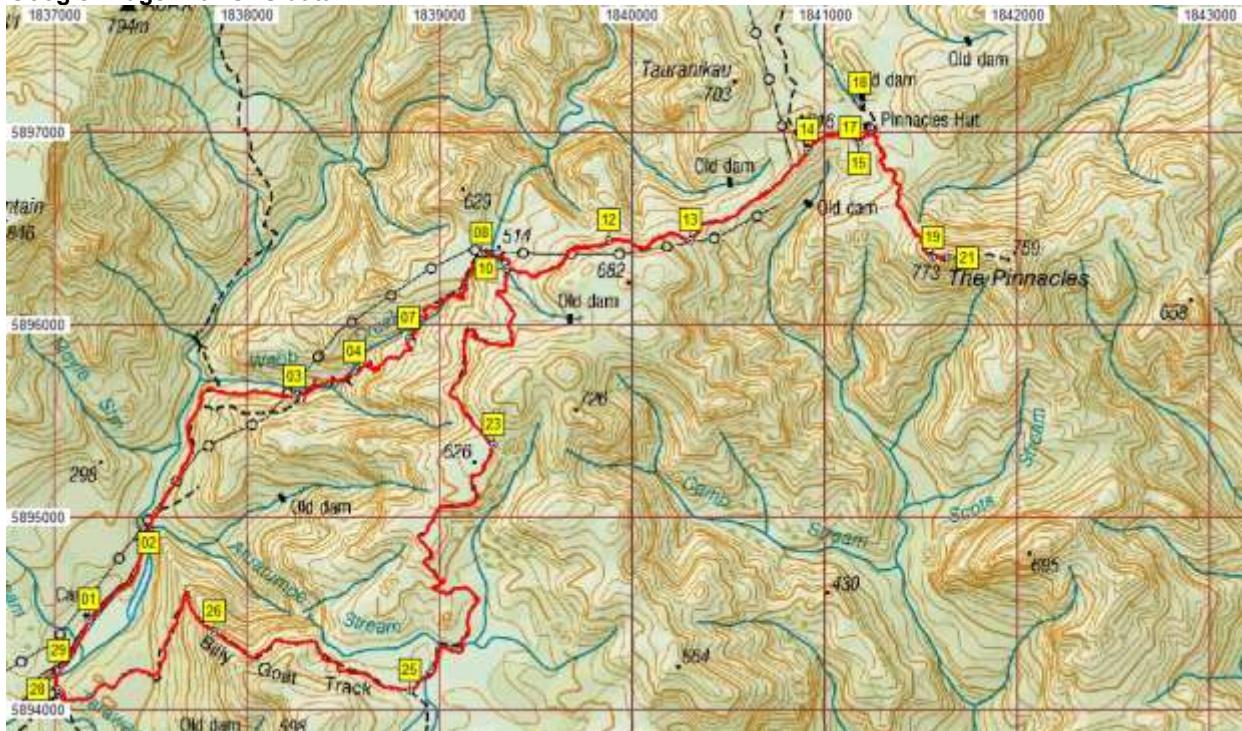


Hat dunking AC system



Most people leave their packs at the hut whilst they climb up to the summit of the Pinnacles – this is a good idea as it is a bit of a grunt and often both hands are needed so if you are not too good with your walking pole leave that as well. There is a wet area immediately on leaving the hut and after this the slope gets pretty steep – the path has been upgraded so the fun of scrambling has been taken out of some of this section. But do not worry for on reaching the bottom of the first “easy-ascend” ladder (**WP19741masl**) the fun comes back into it as there are rocky bits, some with metal hoops as foot and hand-holds to get up to the platform (**WP21791masl**).

#### **Map and Google Image with GPS data**



### View from just before the hut



The platform can be reached in 18mins by runners and power-walkers though normal trampers take a bit over 30 minutes or so. The actual crest can be reached with a scramble / climb round the right hand side of the large rock at the platform giving fantastic views (**WP22<sub>800</sub>masl**) but this is not recommended as a fall would be very serious.

The actual crest is roped off and going any further up would be at one's own risk.

### Year 2013 group on top



### Waypoints – NZ Grid

N.	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description	NZTM	Easting	Northing
01	2747575	6456208	156	Car park at end of Kauaeranga Valley Road for Pinnacles	1837178	5894469	
02	2747887	6456606	172	600m (11min); Track on left before river to swing bridge, for flood diversion	1837489	5894868	
03	2748644	6457364	203	1.9km (33:30min); Left for flood detour / swing bridge then up rock staircase	1838245	5895627	
04	2748954	6457496	273	2.3km (45min); Steeper, rough going then left again on flood hazard detour to swing bridge	1838555	5895759	
05	2749034	6457553	315	2.5km (50min); Steepish slope then into open with view down-valley	1838634	5895817	
06	2749243	6457611	394	2.8km (1:03min); Steady upwards with wooden bridge	1838844	5895876	
07	2749240	6457671	391	2.9km (1:07min); Another swing bridge flood diversion	1838841	5895936	
08	2749617	6458107	512	3.7km (1:32min); Notice for "Condemned Creek"	1839217	5896373	
09	2749764	6458063	524	3.8km (1:35min); Y fork going left @flood detour notice to wood bridge if wet weather	1839364	5896328	
10	2749748	6458029	531	3.85km (1:36min); Hydro Camp with junction off on right to Billy Goat Track	1839348	5896295	
11	2749797	6458035	518	3.9km (1:37min); One min later other end of detour (if used) go left.	1839397	5896301	
12	2750282	6458174	577	4.5km (1:50min); Still climbing with view and descriptive notice	1839881	5896440	
13	2750702	6458174	561	5km (1:57min); Massive hollow tree section on right	1840302	5896442	
14	2751313	6458639	607	5.8km (2:14min); Y-fork with left to Moss Creek and right to Pinnacles Hut	1840912	5896908	
15	2751578	6458675	591	6km (2:18min); Helipad on right hand side just before Pinnacles Hut	1841177	5896944	
16	2751613	6458713	588	6.1km (2:19min); Branch off left for hut and on to boardwalk approach	1841213	5896982	
17	2751641	6458760	592	6.2km (2:20min); Pinnacles Hut 80 beds and luxury	1841240	5897029	
18	2751584	6458885	453	Dancing Camp Dam and pool for a dip 5 min below Pinnacles Hut on very good path	1841183	5897154	
19	2751956	6458082	741	0.9km (15min run / 30min walk from hut); Bottom of first ladder, rather steep climb	1841557	5896352	
20	2751954	6458077	754	900+m (16min run from hut); Top of second, easy ascent ladder	1841555	5896347	
21	2752042	6458080	791	1km (18min run / 40min walk from hut); Pinnacles Platform	1841642	5896350	
22	2752041	6458069	800	Pinnacles crest via right hand side scramble on rocks	1841641	5896339	
23	2749678	6457117	625	2.3km (37min from hut); Change SE to SW to be below steep slopes	1839280	5895382	
24	2749296	6455891	451	5.9km (1:57min from hut); Semi permanent camp site plus toilet after river crossing	1838901	5894154	
25	2749241	6455838	452	6.1km (2:17min from hut); T-junction going right for Billy Goat track, easy walking	1838845	5894102	
26	2748223	6456149	389	7.3km (2:36min); Incliner section with rail still in place, steep & rough down but good steps	1837826	5894411	
27	2748133	6456288	359	7.5km (2:43min); View of camps in valley bottom within minutes of clearing the rail section	1837736	5894550	
28	2747421	6455851	150	8.7km (3:08min from hut); Right at track junction for final river crossing after long forest walk	1837025	5894111	
29	2747415	6455942	149	8.8km (3:10min); Meet gravel road going to the right for 300m (7min) to car park	1837019	5894202	

The walk back down from the Pinnacles Hut via the Billy Goat Track takes a little longer but is well worthwhile tackling. From the hut it is back down the inwards track to the Hydro Camp junction (**WP10<sub>531</sub>masl**) which takes no time at all compared to going inwards and upwards. The track from here is of the same high standard as the inwards track and thoughts of the Romans keep occurring – who else would lay all this stone mosaic for walking on? Most of the way is on the contour or gentle ridges and there are many magnificent views. Quite a few of the stream lines crossed are like massive chutes but it is assumed that these are naturally eroded stream lines as the log-cutters could not have risked getting the logs down such steep rocky chutes. There are a few points where there are very clear changes in direction with one such point being on an open gentle crest area (**WP23<sub>625</sub>masl**). The next couple of kilometres are also quite easy walking with good track and gentle slope then the Atuatumoe Stream is crossed and there is a flood detour for wet weather use. Just after the stream crossing there is a camp site with a DoC toilet (**WP24<sub>451</sub>masl**), some schools use this site in conjunction with staying at Pinnacles Hut.

A hundred metres or so beyond this camp site there is a T-junction (**WP25<sub>452</sub>masl**) where by going right one gets on to the Billy Goat Track which offers easy walking to begin with. Slopes are very easy for about a couple of kilometres whilst on a NW to W heading but eventually from the views which develop on the north side very steep slopes can be seen. Then a piece of the old rail from the log-railway is encountered (**WP26<sub>389</sub>masl**) whilst the track plunges downhill – the track is actually easy grade steps parallel to the rail and the descent is simple. There is a drop of about 100m in the kilometre after WP26 and a few of the steps are slightly anti-hobbit in size but there is nothing too tricky at all. Then it is virtually flat walking in the forest heading out the last kilometre to the Tarawaera Stream where, once again, there is a choice of river crossing or a bridge as a flood detour. Turning right at the small junction (**WP28<sub>150</sub>masl**) leads straight into the river for an easy crossing in low water level conditions. On crossing the river the gravel road is met (**WP29<sub>149</sub>masl**) with the car park a few minutes away 300m to the right.

### Hollow tree

