

WHAKAPAPA RIDGE and WHAKAPAPANUI STREAM

260 Series Map: S20 Ohakune and T20 Ruapehu

Top050 Map: BJ34 Mnt Ruapehu

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi then you have the choice:

- Follow the Desert Highway (SH1) and turn off right on to SH46 for Rangipo. Left to SH47 at the one and only T-junction
- Turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa, or
- In Turangi turn off SH1 right to SH41 then left to SH47 and proceed as above. This route is shown opposite
- Pass the Chateau on the left and park in the car park on the right which has toilets and is quite safe for vehicles compared to some other car parks.

Rough description. A relatively easy walk taking close to 4 hours covering about 9km with 300-400 metres of ascent. Starting at the car park in Whakapapa the route goes up the Whakapapa Ridge (poorly maintained track) to a fair height then drops off to the right (south) into the Whakapapanui Stream. There is an established safe crossing point (**WP05**) used for other tramps if the water level is safe. From this point (**WP07**) the walk continues upstream on the true right bank then climbs back up on to the Whakapapa Ridge at a high point just before the Pinnacles Ridge starts. From here it is an easy descent back down to Whakapapa apart from remembering not to enter the very hummocky, vegetated silt capped area on the crest too soon – it is hard walking in this vegetated zone.

Detail: Turn right out of the car park (**WP01**^{1135masl}) opposite the Chateau, cross the road and turn up behind the public toilets a few metres uphill from the Information Centre. The start is on a neat gravel track (touristic) and just within the bush line but within 15 minutes there are open views (**WP02**^{1210masl}). Further up the track degrades a bit with some large, anti-hobbit sized steps just before a semi-round picnic table. At this point take the vague track that goes to the right and soon the tussock area is entered. Within 35 minutes the edge of the gentle crest is reached (**WP04**^{1317 masl}) just before a small cairn from where there are good views up and down the valley. After this there is a gently descending wet eroded area where moisture can be seen seeping out from under the vegetated area uphill on the left hand side.

Continue walking more or less parallel to this eroded edge till about 55 minutes have elapsed when it is necessary to veer to the right towards the Whakapapanui Stream – a small cairn has been constructed at this point. After 15 minutes of sidling more or less to the SE there is a largish rock just at the start of the final descent to the stream, the last part of this descent is on loose material so watch the footing. The stream is now approached (**WP06**^{1261masl}) but does not need to be crossed – it is crossed if taking the Haggis Cruncher which exits out on to the Bruce Road. Walking parallel to the stream line on the true right bank is relatively easy but there are a couple of areas with (**WP06**^{1309masl}) boulders, some of which are mossy and can be slippery. Soon after this the route starts to move away from the stream as it heads SE and a narrowing of the river valley ahead can be seen. A ridge can now be determined running up to the NE and this is followed but it is not a hard ascent – notice all the semi-subterranean stream lines gurgling away under the feet as the slope is tackled.

Tricky bits



Up-valley view Whakapapanui

About 500 metres up another turn is made to the NW following yet another ridge and soon a high point (**WP07**^{1440masl}) actually on the Whakapapa Ridge is reached. The exit via the ridge starts off with a gentle ascent to reach a high-point at 1438masl then slowly swings round to WNW then there are a few undulations and soon the vegetated silt capping on the ridge can be determined and reached. Twenty minutes after the high point there is an outlier of this (**WP08**^{1398masl}) raised feature which is a high eroded bank and is virtually impenetrable so ensure you walk to the left of it. Once the final downhill section is started there is a clear view of Tongariro Chateau and from here it is relatively steep downhill on a deteriorating track with the only other feature of note being a picnic table in the middle of the path. The track soon improves as was noted on the way in as it has been upgraded for tourists and the end is behind the shelter with toilets on the road in Whakapapa.



Bluffs on true left bank



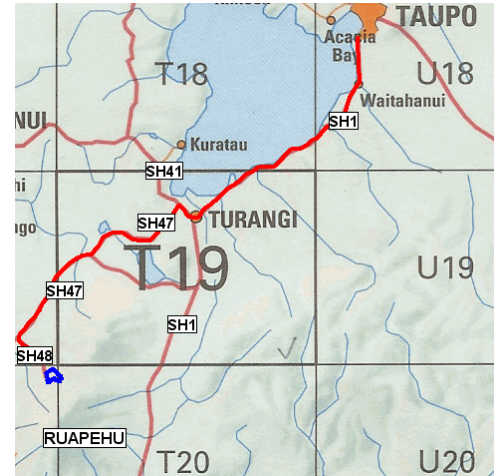
Upper reaches towards Happy Valley



NZ Grid GPS: Geodetic Datum 1949

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

Access



Route to start in RED and tramp route in BLUE above

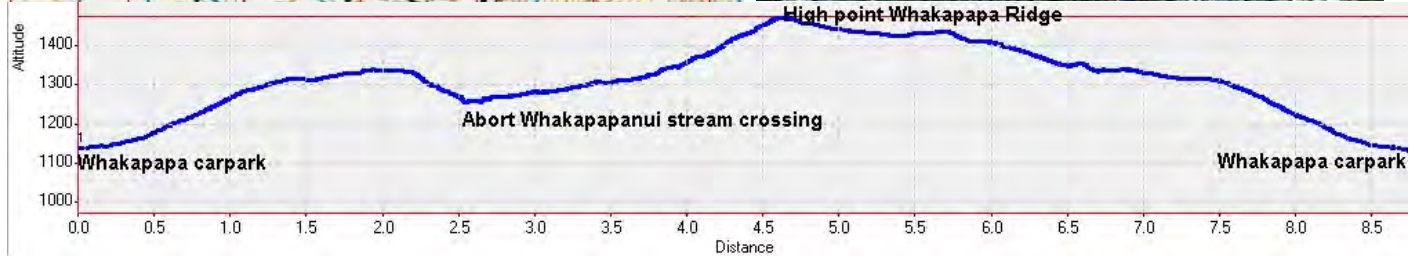
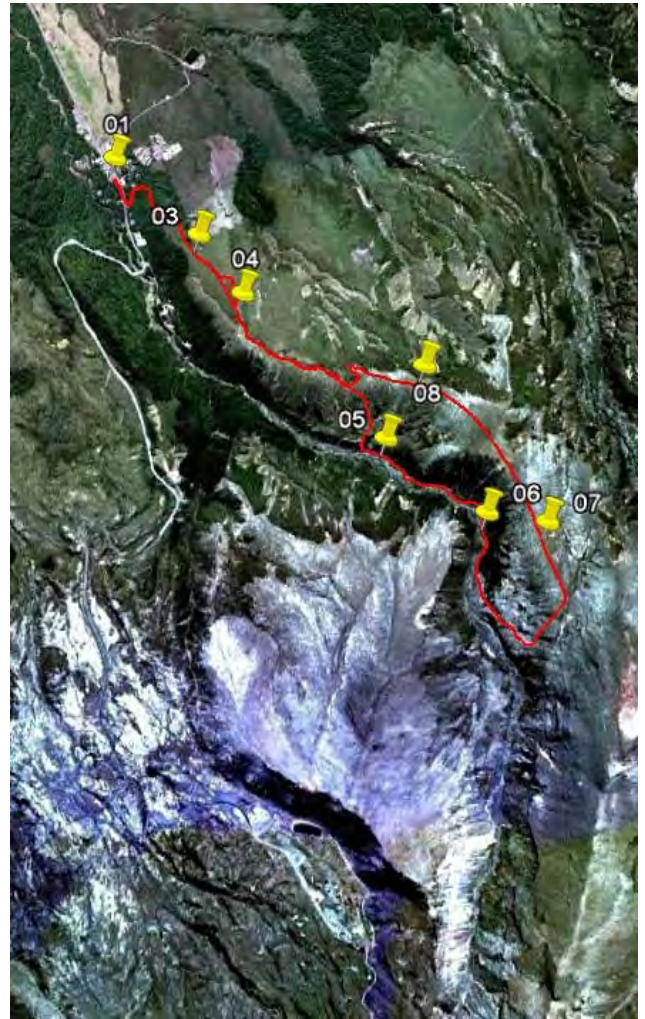
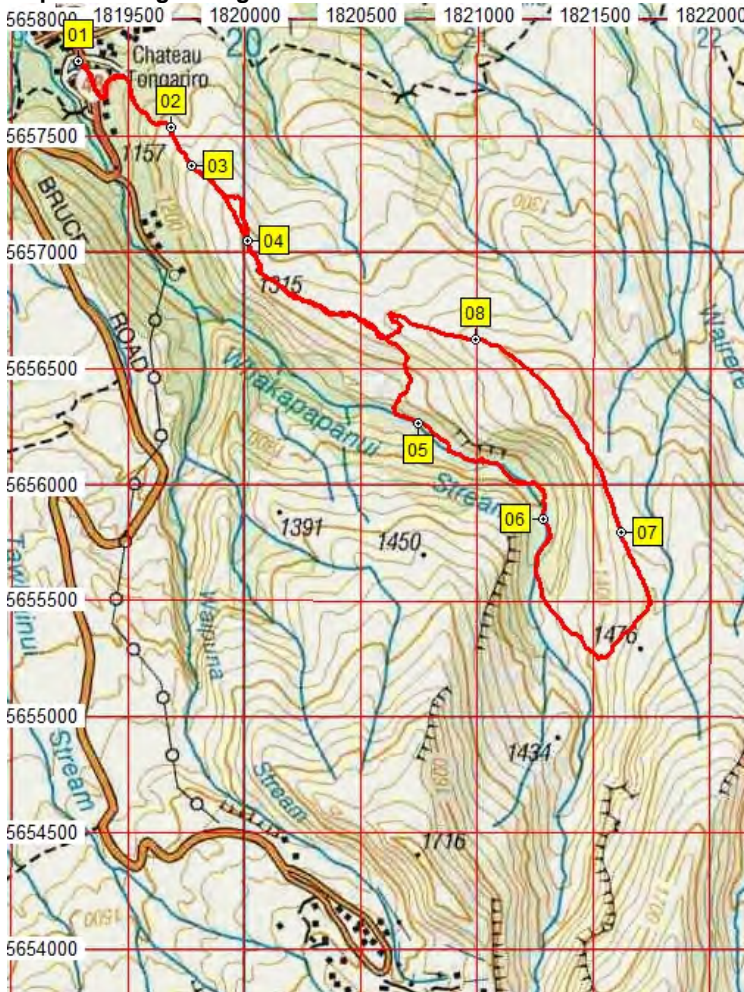
Wet area below eroded edge



Upstream of river crossing



Map and Google Image with GPS data



Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	2729369	6219679	1135	Car park opposite Chateau in Whakapapa
02	2729769	6219395	1210	15min; Out of trees into open on benched tourist track
03	2729856	6219231	1240	25mins; up track on Whakapapa ridge behind roadside toilets and at rounded picnic table
04	2730099	6218903	1317	35min; edge of crest with view of Bruce Road
05	2730830	6218119	1261	1:15min; stream crossing location for Haggis Cruncher
06	2731366	6217711	1309	2:00min; boulder field on true right bank of Whakapapanui Stream
07	2731699	6217649	1440	2:45min; near the upper limit of Whakapapa Ridge below start of Pinnacles Ridge
08	2731075	6218482	1398	3hrs; on Whakapapa Ridge at the highest remnant of the vegetated silt cap

NZTM

Easting	Northing
1819283	5657823
1819683	5657539
1819770	5657375
1820014	5657047
1820746	5656263
1821282	5655855
1821616	5655793
1820990	5656626

It is considered that this tramp can be extended by staying in the Whakapapanui Stream valley and following it as far as is possible up towards the "Happy Valley" area. This possible route will be attempted soon once summer kicks in and river flows are low. It might even be possible to exit via the ski area at the top of the Bruce Road / Happy Valley!

Time taken : 3:51:18
 Total Distance : 8.761 Km
 Average Speed : 2.273 KPH
 Total ascent : 388metres
 Minimum Altitude : 1132 Meters
 Maximum Altitude : 1474 Meters

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