



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

April 2025



How small we are on Roy's Peak Photo by Cathy Dickson

WAIKATO HUT

Your lodge on Mt Ruapehu
Tongariro National Park



www.wtc.org.nz



Black fantail
photo by Selwyn June

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WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB
P. O. Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

Free to members

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 872

April 2025

General Committee

President:	Rupert Craggs	027 6811926
Past President:	Judith Bogle	027 3810283
Secretary:	Dorothy Cawdron	027 7424222
Treasurer:	Guy Domett	027 2483008
Members:	John McArthur (VP Tramp) Stephen Phillips (VP Ski) Allan Wickens Selwyn June Les Warren	

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### Tramping Subcommittee

**Tramping email:** [waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com](mailto:waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com)

|                         |                                                                                  |             |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Chairperson:</b>     | John McArthur <a href="mailto:mcarthur@outlook.co.nz">mcarthur@outlook.co.nz</a> | 021 2889641 |
| <b>Club Captain:</b>    | Les Warren                                                                       | 027 8644937 |
| <b>Membership:</b>      | Jocelyn Widmer                                                                   | 027 8664795 |
| <b>Member:</b>          | Selwyn June                                                                      | 027 4978151 |
| <b>Transport:</b>       | Allan Wickens                                                                    | 027 9509546 |
| <b>Social convenor:</b> | David Totman                                                                     | 021 868720  |

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Ski Subcommittee

Ski email: waikatoski@gmail.com

Chairperson:		
Ski VP:	Stephen Phillips	021 1031436
Bookings:	Ashley Hoskin	027 4909545
Finance officer:	Michael Barker	021 2463500
Members:	Ashley Hoskin	027 4909545

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|                                     |                                                                    |             |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Facebook:</b>                    | Jacqui Dick                                                        | 021 1375201 |
| <b>Bulletin:</b>                    | Lesley Kuggeleijn                                                  | 027 4942414 |
| <b>Editor &amp; Club Librarian:</b> | Dianne June <a href="mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz">djune@xtra.co.nz</a> | 07 8433066  |

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Waikato Tramping Club account: 03 1555 0091625 02 (include the trip no.)

Club Night: Wednesday 7th May, 2025

Annual General Meeting

Come along and have your say on how you see the club being run and think about putting your hand up to help.

Further information will be circulated by email over the next few weeks.

We meet at St. Peter's Cathedral in Victoria St.

Door opens at 7.00pm and the meeting starts at 7.30pm.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2025

3178	13 Apr	E/M	Te Kauri Park	Miriam Bennett
3179	18-22 Apr	M/F	Exploring Tongariro NP	Les Warren/ Judith Bogle
	19-23 Apr	M	Waikaremoana great walk	Sarah McLeay
3180	25-27 Apr	M/F	Whanganui	Judith Bogle
3181	4 May	E/M	Mt. William & Vivien falls	John Wilson
3182	10/11 May	M	Te Whare Okioki	John McArthur
3183	18 May	M	Rangitoto Is	Les Warren
3184	24/25 May	M	Waikawau – Leitch's hut	Julia Lile/ Judith Bogle
3185	31 May-2 Jun	M/F	Ruahines	Judith Bogle
3186	8 June	E/M	Mokaihaha track	Les Warren
3188	20-22 Jun	n/a	Matariki & 75 yrs	Allan Wickens
3191	12-13 Jul	M/F	Snowcraft I	Allan Wickens/ Mike Peck

Don't let a lack of equipment deter you from coming on a trip. Talk to the trip leader - who may be able to assist with lending or sharing gear.

TIME and FITNESS GUIDELINES

E = Easy.	Up to 4 hours per day, pace slower than E/M.
E/M = Easy/Medium.	Up to 5-6 hours/day, pace slower than M.
M = Medium.	Up to 6-7 hours/day, at standard walking pace.
M/F = Medium/Fit.	Up to 7-8 hours/day, pace faster than M.
F = Fit.	Over 8 hours/day, pace faster than M/F.

Note that factors such as party size, fitness, weather, terrain and leadership will influence actual times, so the above are estimates only.

Bookings and Cancellations: no later than the **TUESDAY** before the trip. Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip.

Departure Point: Weekend trips depart from the Gate 1 at Waikato University. Park closer to other vehicles as this area is security monitored. Leave on Friday nights at 7pm sharp unless otherwise stated. Day trips depart from London St at the river end- park on the roadside. Leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

If someone is concerned because a trip is **late back**, contact:

1) Club Captain; 2) President; 3) a committee member.

Minimum equipment required:

Day Trips: A thermal layer (polypropylene, polyester etc or wool), an insulating layer of fleece (polartec etc) or wool and a water & wind-proof parka outer shell. Shorts or long-johns/over-trousers in cool or wet weather. Torch and sunscreen. Boots or strong shoes. Lunch, snacks and water bottle. First aid kit.

Weekend Trips: The above, plus pack with plastic liner bag, sleeping bag, tent, sleeping mat, cooker, billy, plate or bowl, spoon, food, spare dry clothes for evening, towel, toilet gear, light camp shoes. A water purifier can be useful. Plus, in extreme weather or country: additional warm top, over-trousers or woollen/ fleece trousers, warm outdoor mittens or gloves, over-mitts, warm hat or balaclava, sunglasses. Ice axe and crampons for snow.

Trip Descriptions

Waikato Hut work party

1-14 Apr

This trip is described in the ski report at the end of all the tramping descriptions.

Trip 3178

Te Kauri Park Reserve

13 Apr

Join me for a tour of the Te Kauri Reserve. I am planning to take you on a different route that is often not used. It can be muddy and there are sections of good track and rough track, hence the easy/medium grade. The Junats (kids aged 11-18), who have been looking after the Te Kauri Reserve and the Lodge since the mid 60's, find the terrain no problem at all, and one of the tracks we will use is fondly known as "The Obstacle Course".

The route will be a combination of the Sheep track, Waikuku track, Warikanui route and the Manuka track. Lunch will be down at the campsite, and I will arrange to have access to the facilities at the Junats Lodge, including the kitchen for an afternoon cuppa. We may even have time to check out the Lodge Museum too.

Leader: Miriam Bennett

Ph: 021 146 8420

Grade: E/M

Email: *miriamlbennett@gmail.com*

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3179

Exploring Tongariro NP

17-21 Apr

This trip will be day walks from our Base, Waikato Club Hut and treated as a social trip. Plenty of choices to decide on but trips we are looking at include:

- Saddle Cone & Gull Colony via Meads Wall
- Return trip - Ridge Track/Wairere Stream/Taranaki Falls to Whakapapa Village
- Lake Surprise (and maybe to Mangaturuturu Hut)

- Whakapapanui track and Silica Rapids track or doing a loop out of Mangahuia Campsite.
- Okupata Caves.
- Old Blyth Track.
- Waihothonu Hut and towards Rangipo Hut and return from SH1.
- Horopito track to Mangaturuturu Hut (and possibly onto Iwikau Village).

What vehicles we take and who travels with whom, will be discussed further closer to the trip with those who have registered.

Catering – Self-catering. Everyone to bring their own food and drink (breakfasts/lunches/dinners/snacks). Bring nibbles to share in the evenings.

Gear – Will need sleeping bag and clothes, clothes for tramping (warm/wet weather), Day Pack, Poles (optional), Headlamp, suitable footwear (terrain will be rocky / rough), water bottles

NOTE: The website has been updated with this change of trip. If interested in this trip, please register and further information will be sent to you.

Leaders: Les Warren

Ph: 027 8644937

Grade: M

Judith Bogle

027 381 0283

Email: : warrenlb2017@outlook.com or judith.bogle@outlook.com

Accommodation: Club Hut (Booked) \$25/night

Transport: Private Vehicles. Drive down Thursday, late afternoon/early evening

Trip 3180

Whanganui

25-27 Apr

Mangapurua and Kaiwhakauka tracks.

The track starts from Whakahoro and ends at the Bridge to Nowhere. This takes 3 days and is 40km long. We will leave early on Anzac day and come back on Sunday. Should be 1x 2.5hr day and 2x 5hr days. You will need to bring a tent as there are no huts. We will staying at the Mosley campsite and the Bettjeman or Hellswell campsite depending on how quick we are. The plan is to get the boat from the Bridge to Nowhere back to Whakahoro, but this is dependent on drivers so the tramp may end up going the reverse way. I am still waiting to hear back from the Blue Duck Station. If we get some time we may have a visit to the café there.

This is a cycle track so should be a good one. We will going to the Mangapurua Trig to hopefully get some views of Taranaki and Tongariro National Park. We will be going through farmland and past some old homesteads, plus there are other historical objects and places of interest. There is slippery creek, papa bluffs, swing bridges, Hellswell waterfall and more.

Leader: Judith Bogle

Ph: 027 381 0283

Grade: M/F

Email: judith.bogle@outlook.com

Cost: tba

"I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees"
by Henry David Thoreau.

Trip 3181 **Mt. William & Vivien falls** **4 May**

Mt William is prominent on the Bombay Hills to the east of the motorway. Its 373 metre height affords wide views, from the west coast to the Firth of Thames, and from the Waikato to Auckland. We will start from Puketutu Road and climb up over farmland for about 2km to reach the summit. From there we cross more farmland before descending through attractive forest to McMillan Road. The full trip takes about 3 hours. We will then travel by road through Tuakau, cross the Waikato River and walk to 12 metre high Vivian Falls. This is a 4.3km return walk, mostly through bush, taking about 1½ hours.

Leader: John Wilson **Ph:** 021 168 2082 **Grade:** M

Email: ijnwilnz@gmail.com

Transport: Senior member \$20-25 Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3182 **Te Whare Okioki** **10/11 May**

We will leave early on Saturday morning and travel to the end of Te Tuhi Road. The track then leads off across farmland and up an approximately 200m climb to the plateau. Then through good bush track and turn onto the poorly maintained route to the south to Mangamuka hut. This is an old four bunk hunting hut and we will have lunch and see what state it is in.

Then on across flat swampy muddy land to regain the North South track about 1km south of the Te Whare Okioki hut. The hut is already booked out so we will be camping. There is ample camping space around a campfire area so this should not be a problem, but may make us more weather sensitive.

Sunday we will walk back out via the North South track and if we start early enough we may take in some small waterfalls on a detour to the north. This may be a good first camp experience for some as it is not far from home and in a good camp site. Be prepared for mud!

Leader: John McArthur **Ph:** 021 2889641 **Grade:** M

Email: mcarthur@outlook.co.nz

Transport: Senior Member \$65-75 Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3183 **Rangitoto Is** **18 May**

NOTE: This trip is now a day trip. I am looking at doing a separate weekend trip to Motutapu Island, later in the year.

Ferry to Rangitoto Island

We will use Fullers360 Ferry. Individuals must **book their own ferry** return trip leaving the downtown terminal at 0915hrs, Pier 13 & 14 and returning from Rangitoto Island at 4pm. This will give us a good 5hrs on the Island. Departure time from Hamilton will be included in the group emails closer to the time.

Walks on Rangitoto Island

There are a few longer walks but, probably the main one we would do is the walk up to the Summit. There is a side walk to the Lava Caves we can include. There are also some shorter walks close to Rangitoto Wharf – Kowhai Grove and Kidney Fern Glen.

Leader: Les Warren **Ph:** 027 8644937 **Grade:** E/M
Email: *warrenlb2017@outlook.com*
Transport: Senior member \$20-25 Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3184 Waikawau to Leitch's clearing 24/25 May

We will travel to Waikawau leaving Hamilton early Saturday morning (approx. 1.40hr drive). We begin the trip following the Waikawau Track, a mix of 4WD and mapped bush track most of the day and then link on to the Mangatoa Track and on to Leitch's Clearing where we will stay the night at Leitch's Hut. It is expected to take around 7 hours. To date we know most of the track is clear, but there are potentially some sections that may require a bit of bush bashing, so it would be prudent to take long gaiters. We expect to know a bit more about these sections before the trip.

Located in the Whareorino Conservation Area there is some wonderful fauna and flora to enjoy. The track clearing trip team reported seeing native bats at their campsite, along with hearing calls from kiwi and bellbirds.

Depending on our arrangements with our driver we would look to be dropped off at the Waikawau end and picked up having done the loop out via Mahoenui or Leitch's Track. This is yet to be confirmed closer to the time.

Given this trip is getting into late May it is advisable to take a sleeping mat (i.e. a warm one with a good R value) as it can get quite cold in the hut at night.

Leaders: Julia Lile **Ph:** 027 4789989 **Grade:** M
 Judith Bogle 027 3810283

Transport: Senior Member \$65-75 Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3185 Ruahines 31 May- 2 Jun

This trip is in the Ruahines between Traverse (A-Frame) Hut – Bottom point Longview/Makaretu Hut Tk - Longview Hut – Top point. If you are up for a surprise to where you will be going this is the trip for you. I am getting the new leaders to formulate a trip in this area and the one they agree upon will be the route we take. It will be part of a training session of going where we have not done a recce in. Be aware that this trip will be in steep country and there is a high possibility of river crossings or walking up rivers. You will need to be prepared that it will be cold.

Leader: Judith Bogle **Ph:** 027 3810283 **Grade:** M
Email: *judith.bogle@outlook.com*

Transport: tba

Trip 3186 Mokaihaha Track 8 Jun

We will head off to Mamaku and in a SE direction to find the start to the Mokaihaha track which takes us to Lake Rotohokakoha. This is a most unusual lake in that it is completely surrounded by native forest and possibly not well seen from above because of the proximity of the surrounding forest. An interesting trip and in the shade. It is also an area where kokako are to be heard.

The day is an easy one and plenty of time for chatting. Come along and explore a place the club doesn't often visit.

Leader: Les Warren

Ph: 027 8644937

Grade: E/M

Email: *warrenlb2017@outlook.com*

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3187

Waihaha Hut & Waihora lagoon

14/15 Jun

Saturday we'll walk to Waihaha Hut (3hrs) for the night. Hut has only 10 bunks so tents will be needed. Could explore close to the Hut in the afternoon.

Sunday walk out same way and visit the Waihora Lagoon on the way home. More details tba.

Leader: Les Warren

Ph: 027 8644937

Grade: E/M

Email: *warrenlb2017@outlook.com*

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3188

Matariki & WTC 75 yrs on

20-22 Jun

Over this long weekend, we will have three different celebrations combined, to make for an interesting and active 3 days.

Matariki, Friday 20 June this year, is a significant day of celebration in Maori culture, as Matariki is the Pleiades star cluster which rises in late June or early July. The rising marks the beginning of the new year in the Maori lunar calendar.

Hopefully, this night will be clear so we can observe the seven stars in this cluster. We will have a special Matariki dinner on this day.

Waikato Tramping Club is 75 years old!

Yet another milestone has been achieved in our Club history. In 2021 we (belatedly due to Covid) had our 70th anniversary a year later than planned. We did manage to have a rewarding get together at Pirongia Lodge, but many could not attend at that time. The 75th will be less involved but we will have walks based at our Ruapehu accommodation this time. Those unable to attend the 2021 event now have an opportunity to come and tramp or stroll with both old-time members and those new to the Club. (As an aside, for those unable to attend this event, we will hold a special Club Night at our usual meeting place in Hamilton on Wednesday the 4th of June. We'll have old photos, memorabilia etc for those interested in catching up with past Club events and people).

Our Hut/Lodge had its major additions 50 years ago!

This is another important milestone. There are just a few members with us today, who helped with the major refit and gave our hut/lodge, the shape and size it is today. Thanks to the dedicated members we have a wonderful amenity that we can all share and of course there have been other significant upgrades up to now.

The programme:

There will be 3 nights of accommodation at our Lodge (Thursday-Friday-Saturday). On each of the 3 days, we plan to do several walks of different levels. If it snows, we may even have a chance to get to the crater using snowcraft skills. Otherwise, you can have a leisurely weekend based at the lodge. On

Sunday, we leave earlier than normal and travel to Taumarunui where we will have lunch at a café and enjoy a talk from a local Maori woman well versed in the significance of Matariki to her people.

Co-ordinator: Allan Wickens **Ph:** 027 950 9546 **Grade:** Sloth to fit

Email: allanwickens@hotmail.com (preferred contact)

Accommodation: \$25 members and \$30 non-members.

Transport: Vans will be available (approx. \$60-member, \$70 non-member), otherwise private cars

Food: 2 dinners plus 3 breakfasts. Details later and you may have to bring your own lunch/walking food (tba). Gear list and more info in follow-up group emails after registration

Trip 3191

Snowcraft Course One (basic)

12-13 Jul

Once again, we will be holding a number of snowcraft-related events in 2025. First up, is one of the most popular trips we run each year and that is Snowcraft One/Basic. Aimed at introducing you to the alpine environment, you will learn valuable skills to safely enjoy that experience.

The group will meet up at Whakapapa on Friday night and the basics of snowcraft will be taught the following day and Sunday. Trainees will be taught how to use crampons and ice axe, self-arrest, how to walk on icy slopes, navigation tips, basic avalanche awareness plus what to wear etc. This instruction will be done in areas close to the Club Hut, but we will spend most of the day out weather permitting. A full assessment will be done by the instructors of those learning the skills that are taught. If anyone is having difficulty, extra training will be given the next day where necessary. If the weather is too bad on Saturday, we will do instruction in our cosy lounge as far as practical. On Saturday evening, there will be a sumptuous meal in our large dining room.

Sunday's instruction depends on how much we managed to cover on Saturday. If all went well, we have a chance to try out our new-found skills by climbing to the crater or as far as the Alpine Club Hut, the highest inhabited building on the maunga. We plan on being out for most of the day, returning to our Hut by about 2pm at the latest to clean up and get back to Hamilton at a reasonable time. Given good weather, by the end of the weekend you will understand the principles behind the rather complex concept of "Snowcraft". It takes a lot of practice and genuine understanding of what is real and perceived danger when entering the snow and ice heights of Ruapehu. Our leaders have been doing this sort of thing for years and yet they never fail to be fascinated by the world of snow and ice. On satisfying our instructors that you have completed this Course with competence, you may attend our follow-up Snowcraft Two which will be held over the weekend of 9-10 August. The third event is our Winter Tramp (date to be determined). The departure time will be early Friday evening 11 July. Most will go in vans from our weekend departure point at Waikato University Gate One carpark. We can pick up others enroute (main highway only via Te Awamutu and Te Kuiti please) and

will be based in our large and comfortable Hut Friday and Saturday nights. All meals will be provided.

A full list of gear will be provided on registration (get in early as you may miss out). Crampons and ice axes can be hired from the Club or Bivouac. Mike, who is the Manager of Bivouac in Hamilton, can answer any queries you may have pre-course.

Please Note: To participate in this Course, you must be a member of the Waikato Tramping Club. Application details are on the Club website. Spaces for this course are limited, and a deposit is required to confirm your booking. You must also attend a Gear Evening prior to the Course. Held at Bivouac on a date to be determined this gives you a good chance to sort out your gear needs, especially footwear. Light-weight boots/shoes are a problem when it comes to wearing crampons for example.

Leaders: Allan Wickens Co-Ordinator and Instructor **Ph:** 027 9509546

Mike Peck: Principal Instructor **Ph:** 021 369 256

Email: *allanwickens@hotmail.com* or *mikeypeck@yahoo.com*

Cost: TBA. Includes transport, food and Hut fees plus gear hire where applicable.

(Note: our course cost per trainee represents excellent value when compared to identical courses both commercial and through other Clubs).

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### *Editorial*

Autumn is such a great time to be out and about in our environment. And particularly so this year with the warm and relatively dry weather. I am envious of you all who can get out there. There are so many wonderful and varied trips on our programme that you are spoilt for choice. Please make the most of them – you never know when you may find you can't do so- like me at present. But I sure do enjoy reading all your stories afterwards and looking at your pictures.

For those of you who are trip leaders please remember there are a few points that make your trip memorable. The event itself is always that way but to make it so for future leaders and trip participants, please finish the paperwork. As bulletin editor I do my wee bit ensuring a report is published in the bulletin but the treasurer needs to know who was on the trip so he/she can chase up payment for the trip; the club captain needs to have a report about where you went, and issues encountered along the way/who you needed to get permission from. All these points ensure the club remains a vital functioning unit where the load is shared amongst us all and we continue to face the future with ease. I frequently refer back to past copies of the bulletins to find either a trip description or report for a leader or club member who wants to go somewhere and is seeking information about it.

Let's help keep our club clock ticking along just tickety-boo. Oh, and don't forget to come along to the AGM next month – an important day in our calendar. Dianne

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The real secret of happiness is not what you have or what you receive, it's what you share.

Presidential blog

Greeting Waikato Trampers and Skiers

Another year has passed by and the AGM is upon us next month. I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank all of our committee members for the effort (some huge!) that they put into making the club operate smoothly. With that in mind, we have several positions for next year that are vacant, so please consider stepping up and getting involved and nominate yourself for a position! Rupert

Ski club report

Waikato Hut is in need of maintenance to make it watertight. This could be at weekends or during the week, with accommodation available at the Hut, and with volunteer helpers available. The Ski committee would like to know of any tradespeople within the tramping membership who could assist them with their tasks. Or it could be someone outside the club you may know of. Please let the President know of any leads at: *Rupert.Craggs@niwa.co.nz*

We are also working with the club captain to use the lodge as a base for tramping excursions. Booking system is setup for summer rate only. The password is available from David Macdonald, ph: 0274908560, Steven Phillips ph: 021 1031436 and Ashley Hoskins ph: 027 4909545.

SUMMER BOOKINGS: Book in online at <https://b9c5011ab7bb99eb.sirvoy.me/> or go to the Waikato Ski website and click on winter bookings. You will need to use the code - SUMMER RATES to access bookings/members rates. Please note during the summer this will not be getting checked every day, so you may not get your booking confirmed right away. If it is last minute, and you know how to get to lodge, that is fine, just make sure there is space and book and pay via the online booking system above. If there is no one else there you will need to open and close the lodge down. There are stepwise instructions for this in the foyer. Hut fees for summer (nightly rates) and continue until June

Adult - \$25

Child (0-17 years) - \$15.

Or you can book the entire lodge for \$600 – sleeps 32 in mix of double and single bunks (+2 extra in custodians room) Need any more info or have questions – contact *WaikatOSki@gmail.com*

WORKING PARTIES Working parties for the Waikato Hut are as follows, come and help keep the Hut looking great. Soffits need replacing, windows re-installed with better flashings, barge boards replaced, plus other minor jobs.

March 15/16th – General maintenance and spring cleaning

Another working party to finish the general maintenance and cleaning and tidying, this might include painting and other maintenance

To book contact Stephen Phillips on *innovative.p@hotmail.com* or 0211031436.

There will be a longer session between 1-14th April for any bigger jobs that need doing.

Accommodation is complimentary whilst you are on a working party, and food from Sat breakfast to Sunday lunch is provided. You can also get a free night in the hut for later on in the year to use. Transport private vehicles, carpooling. We have other smaller working parties which may require those with appropriate skills, so would love to hear from you if you can help in this area, This could be at weekends or during the week (depending on available of helpers) , with accommodation available at the Hut, and with volunteer helpers available.

Trip Reports

Trip 3157A **Not the Hollyford Barn Bay Trip** **10-19 Dec**

Mavora lakes/Forks hut/Taipo Hut/Greenstone Hut, Roy's Peak and Aspiring Hut Up to 24hrs prior to flying down to the South Island, we were all set to have an epic 10 day tramp up the Hollyford /Barn Bay Area, but the weather gods demanded we shouldn't go. Large amounts of precipitation were expected, and our safety had to come first. As a result, our group of 8 went down to 4. So, plan B was quickly negotiated with our team of John Mac, Jim Scott and Judith Bogle and myself (Cathy). John kindly offered for us to stay in Wanaka at a family home so we could base ourselves there and do adventuring as weather permitted. Our first day walk was a hot walk up Roy's peak (cover picture). Whew! what a climb but well worth it with the 'instagram' pic opportunity and with epic views from the summit. The dehy packets of dinner meals had to stay in our backpacks as we headed to the local food carts in Wanaka for burritos, bao buns and such like in the evening. Back at base in the evening some decided they didn't like playing bananagrams so I had to finally learn the card game 500.

Plan B: multi day

Day one: A drop off at South Mavora Lake camping area meant our first day began with a gentle picturesque walk along the lake heading towards the fork in the river, where we went left up towards Forks Hut. The rivers took some planning, time and careful crossing as the recent rains had made them potentially treacherous and more challenging. The track to Forks Hut is approximately 10 km and took around 3 hours.

There's a reason why DoC doesn't have a pic of this hut on their website! This was a very 'rustic' hunters hut constructed of corrugated iron, half sawn tree branches and rocks for a fireplace. Once the fire was lit and we established that the 3 wire framed beds were relatively stable, we had a comfortable night with epic views of the surrounding landscape of tussock and mountains under the almost full moon.

Day 2. Into the Bog

We headed back down the track to the Mavora walkway and walked north with our plan to stay at Taipo hut. As it was, we camped there, as there were 3 NOBO (north bound Te Araroa) walkers already well established in the hut. As the first section was a four wheeled drive track there were a few young truck/ute drivers getting

stuck. All for fun. Each to their own!



Forks Hut

photo by Cathy Dickson

Once we left that area past Boundary hut, over the wire bridge into Ngai Tahu land, the bog began. Spongy bog! But the scenery was wonderful. A large bridge over the Mavora river led us to Taipo Hut. This is a beautiful swimming river and was very cooling. Taipo hut has a fence around it to prevent the cows in the valley coming into the hut area.

Day 3: Greenstone hut. After negotiating a little more bog, and river crossings, we entered the beech forest that is iconic to the Greenstone Caples area. There was a lot of tree fall from previous storms. But the forest floor was being filled in by many, many small beech trees. We were treated to the company of a South Island Kaka which was feasting on insects under the dead bark. It had a chat to us before we headed off towards the hut.

Greenstone hut is a 24-bed serviced hut which was full, so we slept out the back in our tents. We had time on our hands after arriving, so we headed off 15 minutes down to a beautiful swimming hole which was raging in places but still ok to have a tentative cold dip into and then sit on the rocks after to enjoy it all. Sigh...

Day 4: Not Steele creek to Upper Caples hut. Talking to some others of the hut users at Greenstone hut, they had met someone who had finished Steele creek walk and had fed back that it was very overgrown, lots of river crossings and it had taken him 10 hours to mid Caples hut, We pondered on our options. As one of our group was suffering some pain we made the decision to walk the four hours out to the Greenstone Caples road end. Fortunately, we were able to be picked up by John McA. The Cardrona hotel was on the way home, so we went there for dinner. Again, the dehy was off the menu!

Day walk: Mount Aspiring hut. This was a spectacular walk on farmland to the new Aspiring hut. This is now bookable all year round and would make for a lovely cool season walk. The next day we were picked up by Les and driven to Haast where I was then going to go home to go to work whilst the others set off on their next adventure. Story to follow...

Trip 3175

Waikawau track clearing

22/23 Mar

On the Friday afternoon, to get to the start we drove through the farmers land via a farm track. Then we walked a 4WD track to the campsite which I changed my mind about and carried on to a better site over a few streams. The others let me explore first, but I managed to find a sunnier spot next to the stream. I was trying to get away from all the cows but even in the morning there was one drinking from the stream. The bird life is wonderful there, we even heard Kiwi during the night and bellbirds in the morning. Also there was a trout in the stream.

Next morning set off to find the entrance to the track and then did track clearing going right up to where our tents were. We then had to come down to the tent site due to a tree fall that was a bit big to clear and ended up having morning tea there. Next was exploring to find where to enter the bush to get to the track again. We landed up going to the end of the 4WD track and finding a way in there. Once in we realised the track started earlier somewhere else which we found on the way back and have now marked. This is just around the curve of the mountain from the campsite. The bush is beautiful and we managed to clear several areas of trees fall. The track is now good up to halfway to the turn off to Leitch's Clearing Hut. Halfway we also found another campsite in the bush under the trees. This is at a cross section of streams Waikawau and Mangapapa, which is also where Cathy found an eel living.

When we got back the others had a swim; there are a couple of decent swimming holes at the campsite. There are also native fish in the streams which we had seen during the day. That Saturday night we lit a fire and while sitting around the fire a native bat came flying around for some time; was an awesome experience. The stars were beautiful, saw satellites and Bee had seen a shooting star the night before. Again the Kiwi were out and the bellbirds in the morning.

Sunday morning we headed out and had coffee and breakfast at Mokau and went to Rapanui beach. At low tide you can walk round to other sections of the beach where you can see the layering of the rock strata. We found some perfectly round rocks stuck in the cliff wall. Again the others went for a swim. This trip is so well worth doing, I'll be back there again. Leader Cathy D, Barb C, Gary McN, Beatrix M and Judith B.

From the committee table:

New Members: Kevin Benge, John Duncan, Karen Clark, Wendy Hughes, Penny Gooch.

Resignations: Warren & Pam Blundell, Joanna Greig, Aidan Rowlingson, Dawn Angove.

Membership: The club has 188 tramping members.

From the committee:

✓ It is with much pleasure and appreciation that we acknowledge a substantial donation of \$6000 by Colin Hancock from Trek 'n Travel for Waikato Hut. Colin is very determined that Waikato Lodge/Hut is an important resource for the region

and he recognizes the patronage of club members over the years. The whole club very much wishes to thank Colin for his generosity.

✓ There are a few committee members standing down for the committee this year so think about putting your hand up to take their place. Check with the secretary what positions will become vacant and what is required of someone in that position so that you are well-prepared before the AGM.

Snippets

➤ Owners urged not to activate **personal locator beacons** for their dogs
Trampers and hunters are being urged to not to activate personal locator beacons for their dogs. Maritime New Zealand's Rescue Coordination Centre confirmed a few dogs were rescued each year after their owner activated a beacon. Their operations manager Mike Clulow said whenever a beacon was used, specialist rescuers including helicopters and expert volunteers were sent by the centre. "These are a valuable and limited resource, and while we understand dogs are important to their owners, it is equally important that rescue resources are available to respond to people whose lives may be at risk. Rescue operations in remote locations and difficult terrain put responders at risk, which we manage very carefully in the interest of saving people's lives."

Activating a personal locator beacon should be limited to when someone was in distress and needed urgent help, he said. Instead, he encouraged people who took their dogs into the wilderness to develop a plan around what they would do if something went wrong. Animals had been recovered in some instances when distressed or injured people were being rescued, but he said it was done on a case-by-case basis.

Source: Radio NZ 23 February 2025

➤ **Banff Film Festival.** The festival will be screened at the Gallagher Performing Arts centre at Waikato University and presented by the NZ Alpine Club. The Thursday screening will focus on Ruapehu, and the Friday screening will focus on Tasman, The screenings begin at 6.30pm. Be moved. Be inspired. Don't miss out. Reserve your tickets today. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit banff.nz. Ticket prices are: General Admission \$25; NZAC member/Youth/Student \$20. Double screening deal - \$40 for both screenings (limited tickets available)

➤ It is high time the **life members' dinner** took place again so a dinner or lunch date needs to be organised. Jean & Dianne are thinking that we should meet in Tauranga for a catch up so we can trade notes at the Matariki and 75th reunion event at the end of June. If you are a life member, can you check your diary and see whether the Friday or Saturday or Sunday of the following weekends in June fit with you: 6-8th, or 13-15th. Jean's contact is jnjlwilnz@gmail.com, ph; 078536464 or Dianne: djune@xtra.co.nz, ph 07 8433066. Once we have heard from everyone we'll let you know which weekend/meal option is favoured by the majority.

....from DoC.....

➤ **Record who duckling count** on Taranaki Maunga. A DoC survey shows who duckling numbers in Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki have hit a record high, with who now a regular sight on Taranaki Maunga. Recent monitoring of 8 rivers on Taranaki Maunga saw 106 who ducklings counted, up from 89 in the survey completed last year. Further fledglings were sighted on rivers outside the survey area. For the last 9 years surveys have been conducted along 8 rivers with specially trained conservation dogs. A dog and its handler seek who along each river twice each breeding season, with each river taking an average of 6 hours to survey. DoC biodiversity ranger Joe Carson conducts the annual surveys with her conservation dog, Pip. Joe says she's thrilled with the great result. "Ongoing trapping and last year's application of aerial 1080 have helped protect female who during their critical nesting period. "It's been a huge collective effort from volunteers, Taranaki Mounnga Project and DoC staff to reduce stoats and other predators across the maunga. The work of our partners across the wider maunga also supports who. Together, we're bringing nature back." Settled weather last spring kept rivers stable and low, providing an extra boost to help the young birds survive to fledging. Who are a unique duck species found nowhere else in the world and are known as an icon of New Zealand's backcountry rivers. The who population on Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki is thriving with regular sightings by trampers on many of the hikes.

➤ Efforts to **protect takahē** stepped up as stoat takes toll. DoC has intensified trapping at a wild takahē site in the Greenstone Valley near Queenstown after four recent takahē deaths pointed to stoat predation. Ngāi Tahu and DoC first released takahē on Ngāi Tahu tribal property Greenstone Station in 2023 to establish a new wild population. The predation is not unexpected says DoC Takahē Recovery Operations Manager Deidre Vercoe, but this apparent cluster of deaths over a five-week period is being taken very seriously as it shows even one stoat can do a lot of damage. "DNA analysis and necropsy results point to a stoat, and we have since spotted a likely culprit multiple times on a camera in the area. "A fifth takahē with an unknown cause of death could also have been a victim. Stoats can be extremely trap shy and take some time to catch, so more takahē deaths could become a reality." Takahē monitoring has been increased, extra traps have been installed, a stoat detection dog is on site, baited trail cameras are in use and the existing trapping network is being rebaited more often. "Until New Zealand is predator free, any new wild site for takahē will have a level of predation threat. This is the reality our native birds face daily on the mainland," says Deidre. "Current predator control tools make a big difference to species survival, but this scenario highlights the challenges. Thankfully, the overall takahē population is increasing, so, with the support of our Treaty partner, we can continue to take bold steps to learn more about new wild sites that could support takahē to thrive."

A population of 20-30 takahē has been living in the Greenstone for more than 18 months now and the health and productivity of the birds has exceeded expectations, with two active breeding seasons indicating the Greenstone Valley is a promising wild site. The total number of takahē nationwide is more than 500 and more homes are needed for the growing population. More than half live at wild sites where stoats are present. Ngāi Tahu representative on the Takahē Recovery Group, Gail Thompson says these recent deaths highlight that, despite their large size, sturdy beaks and claws, takahē remain vulnerable to introduced predators wherever they are in the wild.

➤ **World's oldest gecko** found in North Canterbury. 2 geckos living on a predator free island off the North Canterbury coast are thought to be the oldest in the world at around 60 and 64 years. The 2 Waitaha geckos were first discovered and marked in 1967 and 1969 by late Herpetologist Tony Whitaker. His detailed record-keeping allowed Department of Conservation staff to accurately date their ages. DoC Biodiversity Ranger Kaitlyn Leeds says the geckos were found during a five-yearly species monitoring visit to Motunau Island.

“We were all blown away to find 2 of the original marked lizards! We found “Antoinette” (named in honour of Tony Whitaker) first and dated her at 64 years plus and then found the second one called “Brucie-Baby” (Tony’s nickname for his co-worker and conservation legend, Bruce Thomas) and dated her at 60.”

The age record for the Waitaha gecko was previously 53 years with a gecko found on the same island in 2015. Dating geckos on Motunau Island is only possible due to Tony Whitaker individually marking 133 geckos with unique “toe-clip identification” when he started lizard monitoring between 1965 and 1967.

“We no longer toe clip these lizards but it did give us an opportunity to learn how long individual geckos can live for. It’s just amazing they’ve existed on this postage stamp of an island since before the moon landing” says Biodiversity Ranger Allanah Purdie who was also on the island for the visit. Marieke Lettink, who is a Herpetologist and has been going out to the island for twenty years, says the geckos really buck the trend globally living for such a long time and it was a career highlight to find these two. “They really are remarkable. I didn’t hold out any expectations that we would find two of Tony’s old mates still living. In global terms, these native geckos are just so unique. We know of no other species of gecko living so long – the average around the world for gecko is only a decade.”

Kaitlyn Leeds says Antoinette and Brucie-Baby look pretty good for their age.

“They do look a bit skinnier with looser skin but to be honest, you wouldn’t know they were 60+ years old! Interestingly, female geckos, like female humans tend to live longer than males. It’s also got a lot to do with being in a cool climate on a predator free island. Maybe it’s also their lifestyle”, she laughs, “lapping up the salty air! But in all seriousness, it does make you think about the impacts of predation and comparative longevity for our reptiles on mainland NZ.” Waitaha

geckos are classified as at risk and in decline. They are mostly found in lowland Canterbury, usually in rocky places that provide warmth and refuge from predators. Allannah Purdie says she feels privileged to be able to study the geckos. "These geckos are such an important part of our native landscape. We have such unique species in New Zealand, and these 2 are now world record holders. I'm hoping that we find Antoinette and Brucie-Baby when we do our next visit to the island in five years. Who knows how long these two will live for."

➤ Work underway to **repair Coromandel Walkway**. The Coromandel Walkway, connecting Stony Bay and Fletcher Bay, follows the contour of the coastline and is a popular visitor site in northern Coromandel. It was damaged during the extreme weather events of summer 2022-23, with large slips causing significant damage and forcing the temporary closure of a 670-metre section. "In some sections, the landslips had taken out the track completely and it has been completely impassable," says DoC's Coromandel Supervisor Matt Flynn. DoC staff have waited for land movement in the area to cease – and now the land has settled, work has begun to recut the track. "We weren't willing to risk a repair with land movement still occurring – waiting for the land to stabilise was vital for this project to be successfully completed. We're conscious this is a popular and picturesque asset which draws visitors to the northern peninsula, so we're really pleased to have reinstatement work underway," says Matt.

The reinstatement work has involved contractors using a small 1.5-tonne digger, and also cutting back vegetation. The contractor has cleared slips which were considered safe to remove using the digger, and the project focus now turns to work at the site which must be done by hand. Track reinstatement includes a process called benching, which requires removal of soil to create a flat and safe track surface for visitors.

Contractors completed the first stage of the job on 14 March, and their work will be followed by a team of DoC staff who will be using hand tools to complete the benching process along several sites throughout late March. The resulting section of repaired track will be slightly narrower than the original, but will still meet DoC's own Day Visitor standard. Matt says once the physical work at the site is completed, DoC staff will install new signage advising visitors of the risks and urging caution should they choose to use the track. "One of the most important messages we have for visitors is they need to keep moving through the repaired section. Although we're satisfied the track will be safe enough to use, the repaired section is not a place visitors should stop." The track is set to be fully reopen in mid-April. "We appreciate the community and visitors have been very patient waiting for us to reinstate this track – and we're glad they will soon be able to again enjoy a wonderful Coromandel coastal experience."

....*from FMC*.....

➤ Great news! FMC members will continue to receive a 20% discount on the DoC Backcountry Hut Pass until 30 June 2030.

Although this discount isn't as much as in previous years, it is the maximum that DoC will grant under its new Discount Policy. We also share members' disappointment that DoC won't extend this discount to campsite passes despite our persistent advocacy on this.

This continued BHP discount is possible thanks to the incredible efforts of FMC members and volunteers, who contribute \$7.4 million annually in time and funds to conservation. We calculated this figure based on data recently received from many FMC member clubs who kindly responded to our request for information, which enabled us to complete (a successful!) discount application to DoC.

We encourage you to pass on this good news to your club members via your club newsletters, club nights and social media.

Please note that DoC have advised that they will undertake an 'interim review' of our discount application by end June 2027. This will likely require FMC members to provide updated volunteer data for a 12-month period starting sometime in 2026; we will be in touch nearer the time with specifics on this to help you, and help us here at FMC, plan in advance.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment of all we do here at FMC. We greatly appreciate your membership!

➤ **Outdoor Community Celebrates Win with Health and Safety Reform**

After years of advocacy from outdoor groups, we are celebrating a significant win — changes to health and safety legislation which will help reopen access to outdoor spaces that have been restricted or closed due to landowners' liability concerns.

Changes to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, announced by the government yesterday, provide clarity that landowners will not be held responsible if people get injured on their land while hunting, fishing, tramping, climbing, mountain biking, kayaking, free flying, and more. This is an absolutely positive step for outdoor enthusiasts, as it removes a major barrier that has previously hindered access to both private and public land for activities.

Music on the mountain

What started off as a cuppa with a Waikato Hut passerby, turned into a lovely evening at Waikato Hut being entertained, amused, enthralled, and impressed by the artistry and music talent of Jon Sanders this past weekend. A more in-depth report will follow but here are a few pictures to tease you to watch out for more comments next month. Thanks must go to the team of Allan, Jocelyn and David for providing a unique evenings' entertainment at Waikato hut. Jon says he would love to come back and do something similar again another day – and we will certainly

be very pleased to have him in our midst. Those of you who didn't attend missed a special evening.



Completely at ease..... and keeping his tootsies warm by the fire Photos by Dianne June



A wonderful show from Jon Sanders, playing his guitar here Photo by Dianne June



The Waikato Tramping Club (Inc.)

PO Box 685, Hamilton, 3240

www.wtc.org.nz

Nomination Form for General Committee AGM 2025

I hereby nominate for the position of:

- President
- Vice President Tramping sub-committee
- Vice President Ski sub-committee
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Tramping Club Captain
- Tramping sub-committee representatives (2)
- Ski Club Captain
- Ski sub-committee representatives (2)

Nominating person:

Signed by Nominator:

Seconded by (another member):.....

I (the person nominated for the role ticked above) hereby accept nomination

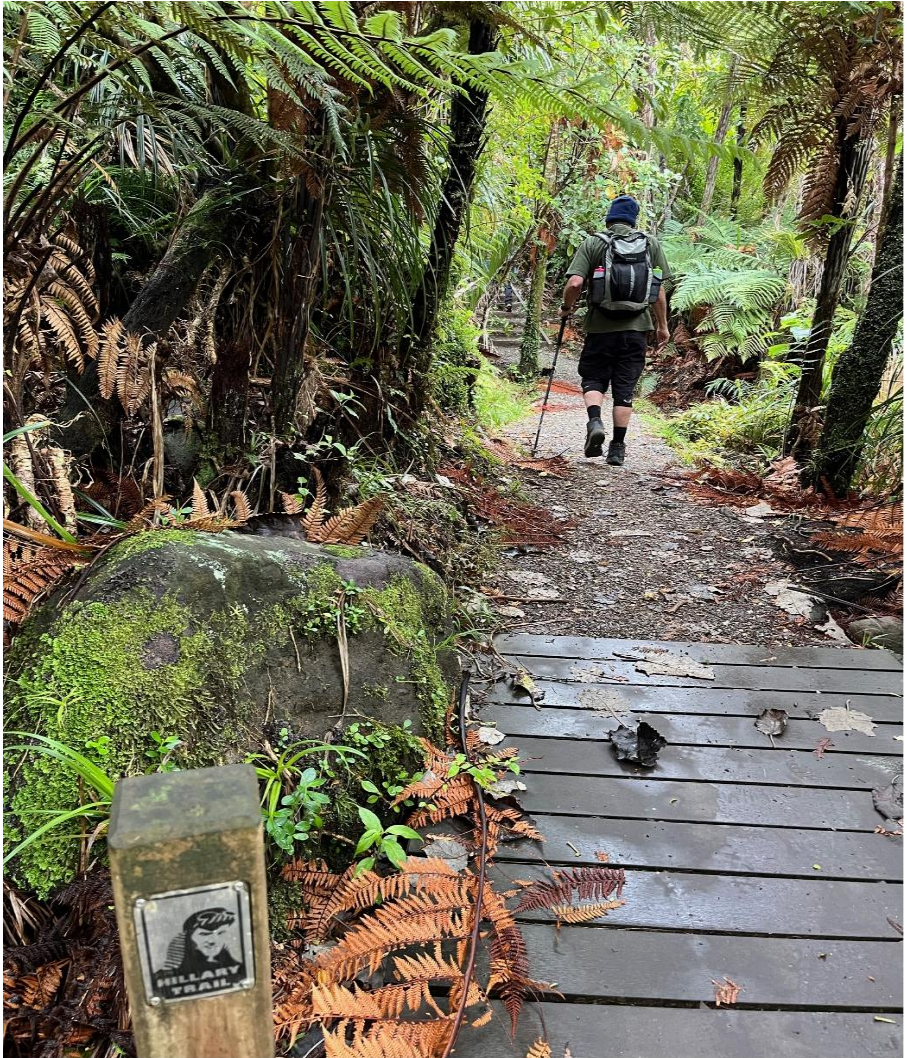
for the position of

Signed: by Nominee (person being nominated)

Nominations to be sent to club secretary no later than 23rd April 2025

Secretary (Dorothy Cawdron: DorothyCawdron@gmail.com

or post to P.O. Box 685, Hamilton 3240



On the Waiorongomai track photo by Peter Ayson



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