Official Bulletin of
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. 890 **October 2026**

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Members: Tramp:	Allan Wickens Selwyn June Peter Ayson Mike Peck	
Members: Ski:	Ashley Hoskin	

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

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

	15 Oct		**River crossing training**	**Belinda Cooper**
3263	**18 Oct**	**E-M**	**Kauaeranga valley**	**Judith Bogle**
3264	**23-26 Oct**	**M/F**	**Te Tatau Pounamu wilderness**	**Les Warren**
3265	**30 Oct- 1 Nov**	**M/F**	**Kaimanawa ranges**	**Miles Rowe**
	4 Nov		**CLUB NIGHT**	**David Totman**
3266	**8 Nov**	**M/F**	**Kaitarakihi Summit**	**Mike Peck**
3267	**14/15 Nov**	**E-M**	**Ruapehu with music**	**Allan Wickens**
3268	**22 Nov**		**Off track Hakarimatas**	**Mike Peck**
3269	**28/29 Nov**	**`M**	**Sunrise Hut**	**Maddie Fiddes**
	2 Dec		**CLUB NIGHT**	**David Totman**
3270	**5/6 Dec**	**E/M**	**Rerekapa & Matapeka falls**	**Cathy Dickson**
3271	**1 Dec3**	**M/F**	**Mountain Madness**	**John McArthur**
3272	**19 Dec**	**n/a**	**Christmas Party**	

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. PLB is recommended but the club does have some for members' use

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 conditions. PLB is recommended but the club does have some for members' use that you can pick up from Bivouac outdoor store.

Trip Descriptions

River Crossing training course **15 & 17 Oct**

DO YOU NEED TO CROSS THAT RIVER? Tramping where there are river crossings? This one-day course is designed for hikers, Te Araroa Trail walkers, teachers and leaders working in outdoor settings – in fact, anyone who will be tramping and doing activities near water. Rivers are one of the greatest hazards in the New Zealand outdoors so learn how to read a river (basic hydrology), when not to cross and where to cross. By the end of the course, you will have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to plan journeys involving rivers and waterways. You will learn to apply critical decision-making techniques, assess river hazards, and employ safe group and individual river-crossing methods, including pack-floating and emergency exit techniques.

There will be an on-line safety briefing, Thurs 15th Oct (7-8pm) and a full practical (Sat 17th Oct, 9am – approx. 4pm) in Kaueranga Valley, near Thames.

Prerequisites participants must be over 18 years of age and be reasonably confident around shallow and deep water and be able to swim

For registration and more information contact: *waikatoadmin@outdoortraining.nz*

Trip 3263 **Kauaeranga valley exploration** **16-18 Oct**

This is a weekend of exploration. There are many tracks up the Kauaeranga Valley we do not explore normally, and these are the ones we will be doing. These can include going to Mount Rowe or Moss creek campsite, Moutepere Trig, easier options Tarawea falls and some of the lookouts. Also, there is the Goat track loop which has been suggested. Tracks walked will depend on weather, group and preferences.

The Kauaeranga Valley is like walking into Jurassic park and has great bush and views from various points. The plan is to stay at one of the Kauaeranga Valley cottages for the weekend. There is a nature walk around here if that is your preference. Therefore, I need numbers quickly to know whether to book the cottage. Tramping will be over 3 days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so you can choose if you want to do 3-2-1 days.

Leader: Judith Bogle **Ph:** 027 3810283 **Grade:** E-M
Email: *judith.bogle@outlook.com*
Transport: tba **Accommodation:** tba

Trip 3264 **Te Tatau Pounamu wilderness area** **23-25 Oct**

[redacted]

Friday - We will need to depart Hamilton about **1pm** as it is a 5hr drive to the Waihohonu carpark, plus need to add about another 30min for a dinner stop. With a 1hr 45min walk to Waihohonu Hut, this will see us arriving between 8pm and 9pm (hopefully the earlier time).



Leader: Les Warren **Ph:** 027 8644937 **Grade:** M/F
Email: *warrenlb20172025@outlook.com*
Transport: tba

Trip 3265 **Kaimanawa Ranges** **30/31 Oct**

We will leave Hamilton on Friday night and likely camp at either the Urchin or Waikoko campsites. Saturday morning will be an early departure from the road end, with a car at either end or 1 car left at the end, and a 3km hike to the track start. The track climbs

steadily through beech forest to the treeline, then follows a poled route along the Umukarikari range, with spectacular views across the Kaimanawa Forest Park, Lake Taupo, and the volcanoes. The route passes Sharp Cone (1481) and the Umukarikari summit (1561m) along an open ridge, before dropping into the Waipakihi valley. The track crosses the Waipakihi river (unbridged), followed by a short track up to the Waipakihi hut (12 buns). The hut is popular but camping is available nearby. The walk will take 6-8 hours.

On Sunday, we may return the same way to Umukarikari summit then take the long open ridgeline on the left leading to the Urchin Trig, or follow the Waipakihi river, if conditions allow, for approximately 10km to find the track that climbs steeply through the bush to the ridgeline and onto Urchin Trig. From here the track descends steeply through the bush to the road end. This could be a long day – 8-10 hours - plus the drive home.

Leader: Mike Rowe **Ph:** 027 2762532 **Grade:** M/F
Email: *miles.rowe@gmail.com*
Transport: tba

Trip 3266 **Kaitarakihi Summit** **8 Nov**

A challenging day hike to Kaitarakihi summit in the Coromandel ranges. The track starts from SH25A Kopu-Hikuai road. We then follow an undulating track which crosses rugged terrain with the track ending with a steep 150m climb assisted by chains to Kaitarakihi summit (852m). The return ttrip is approximately 5-6 hours depending on the stops. It can be very slippery after rain, so sturdy footwear is important. For those not comfortable with the final climb, there is a suitable place
nearby . The trip will go ahead only if reasonably fine conditions precede the day.

Leader: Mike Peck **Ph:** 022 0500499 **Grade:** M/F
Email: *mikeypeck@yahoo.com* **Transport:** tba

Trip 3267 **Explore Ruapehu with music** **14/15 Nov**

Please register early as the numbers for this event are limited and you may miss out. See Poster in the 'Snippets' section.

This event has evolved into something more than originally planned. Along with free guided walks on and around Mount Ruapehu, we will have live music at our well-appointed Lodge at Whakapapa. During each day over the weekend, and given reasonable weather, Waikato Tramping Club members will be showing those on the walks and climbs, areas of the maunga that will probably be off the beaten tracks. There are several options available, ranging from easy to moderate. After you register, you will be asked which activities you prefer to do.

On Saturday night, we have live music! Jon Sanders will be back from touring in Europe and giving us another fine performance no doubt. From his website …."Jon presents an uplifting collection of original uke and bouzaki Celtic/Arabic and New Age Music. A deeply meditative, impishly playful jazz-tinged gem (Irish Times)". Our second performer is Jamon, a New Zealand singer-songwriter whose music "blends reggae-

inspired grooves with soulful melodies and honest storytelling. He has been influenced by Bob Marley, Stevie Wonder, the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Incubus and Crowded House".We also have Sarah Marlowe Spence whose bio includes ,,,,,"I help people uncover their true potential with a variety of healing and music modalities". Sarah is multi-talented and of most relevance to this event are her music performances. She is also a qualified yoga teacher and can offer classes during the event.

Activities: The music event (as above) plus yoga lessons. Free guided walks. Climb to the crater - good boots are essential as well as ice axe and crampons, which we can organise for you. We will also instruct participants in this activity on their proper use. Our Lodge has a good library if you wish to have a restful weekend. Some mountain-oriented films will be shown, more so if the weather is against us.

Leader: Allan Wickens **Ph:** 027 9509546 **Grade:** E/M
Email: *allanwickens@hotmail.com*
Transport: $80-90 members and $85 - 95 non-members (private and vans)

Accommodation: $30 per night (adult members). $20 per night (junior members -under 16). $5.00 extra/night for non-members. NOTE: We anticipate using Ruapehu Ski Lodge as an overflow hut. More about this upon registration.

Music Event: $30 per person

Hire gear: crampons and Ice axes available from Bivouac Hamilton (Mike Peck is our Club Captain)

Food: To be advised.

Trip 3268 **Off Track Hakarimata** **22 Nov**

Meet at the start of Hakarimata Rail Trail off Waingaro Rd, 8:00am. We walk along the Rail trail until near where the climb starts up the Hakarimata range where there is an unmarked track that follows an old gas line. The trail heads west to point 219 and then branches north to exit near the top of the Hakarimata steps. We'll head back down the walkway to complete the loop and back to the carpark. The trip is rated easy and will take 3-4 hours including breaks.

Leader: Mike Peck **Ph:** 022 0500499 **Grade:** M/F
Email: *mikeypeck@yahoo.com*
Transport: Senior Member $30-35 **Senior non-member:** Senior rate +$10

Trip 3269 **Sunrise Hut** **28/29 Nov**

If you want to join us s**ave the date and book your place in the hut!! Once you have booked your bed in the hut for the night of <u>Saturday 28th November</u> - book your trip on WTC website. YOU have to book your hut ticket first!**

Sunrise Hut Track is one of the most popular tracks in the Ruahine Forest Park, particularly with family and school groups. It is a high-quality benched walking track

which makes its way through changing forest types to the open tops. There are superb views of the Hawke's Bay plains and excellent sunrises from the hut, which resides in a tussock basin beside the bush edge. From behind Sunrise Hut there is a 30-minute route up to the sub-alpine herb fields at Armstrong Saddle where you can view Mt Ruapehu on a fine day.
Located in the mid-eastern Ruahine Forest Park, Sunrise Hut is situated on the tops of the Ruahine Range. This hut is the most popular in the park. Sited in a tussock basin beside the bush edge at 1,280 meters, The original hut was constructed in 1983 by NZFS. It was upgraded in 2005. This is a large hut that is a popular recreational destination for day trips or weekend visits. The hut is heated by a wood burner. It is a popular walk for many family groups. The track is well formed, with a significant elevation gain from the carpark to hut of approximately 600 m. It takes 2-3 hours to walk from the carpark to Sunrise hut. In winter, there may be snow around the hut. We probably leave Friday afternoon 27th Nov - further details to follow.

Leader: Maddie Fiddes **Ph:** 021 2512772 **Grade:** M
Email: *madeleine@actrix.co.nz*
Transport: Senior Member $30-35 **Senior non-member:** Senior rate +$10

Trip 3270 **Rerekapa & Matapeka Waterfalls** **5/6 Dec**

This is a weekend exploring two of Taranaki's waterfalls, with a mix of farm tracks, bush tracks and an overnight stay at Rerekapa hut. Friday: Travel from Hamilton to Urenui Beach Campground for the night.Saturday: Walk via farm and bush tracks to Rerekapa Hut. Leave our overnight packs at the hut and continue on to the waterfall before returning to the hut for the night. Sunday: Walk out from the hut (approx. 1½ hours), then head to Matapeka Falls for a 2–3 hour return walk before travelling back to Hamilton.

Leader: Cathy Dickson **Ph:** 021 353561 **Grade:** E/M
Email: *dicksoncatherine@xtra.co.nz*
Transport: tba

Trip 3271 **Mountain Madness** **13 Dec**

This is a spontaneous sort of day out - if the weather packs in we will give it away. The plan is to see how many of the Waikato mountains we can climb in one day - the longest day of the year.
Previous years we have done Pirongia, Maungatautari and Te Aroha, and found this sequence was manageable (provided you eat and drink enough to keep you going). We are back to climbing Maungatautari from the north and you can do the loop (Quad bike track and old tramping track) if you wish. If you don't wish to travel with an established team but you do want to be recognised with a certificate, please take a selfie picture on the top of each peak with the recognisable structure on each - Pirongia lookout, Maungatautari communication mast, Te Aroha transmission mast. (The date stamp on the photo file will be proof of doing it all in one day). Whatever - it will be a full day!!!

Be in! - the car(s) leave Hamilton 6am. We normally do Pirongia up and back before lunch. And we get back late - that's why they call it the Longest Day.
Leader: John McArthur **Ph:** 021 288964 **Grade:** M/F
Email: *mcarthur@outlook.com*
Transport: tba

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Upcoming trips for 2027

Trip 3273 Canterbury Peak bagging **9-17 Jan** **Grade:** M **Leader:** Allan Wickens

Trip 3277A Kaimanawas **29 Jan-01 Feb** **Grade:** F **Leader:** Mike Peck

3277B Kaimanawas **Grade:** M/F **Leader:** Les Warren

Trip 3278 Poronui to Kuirpapango **1-7 Feb** **Grade:** F **Leader:** Steve Dick

Trip 3279 Kawekas **6-8 Feb** **Leader:** Miles Rowe

Trip 3281 Pahautea Hut/Pirongia **20-21 Feb** **Grade:**E/M **Leader:** Allan Wickens

Trip 3283 Queen Charlotte Track **1-5 March** **Leader:** Peter Ayson
Book your hut spaces early.

Trip 3285 Exploring the Cobb Valley 8-17 March **Leader:** Les Warren
You must register for this trip by the 15 JANUARY 2027

Trip 3291 Pylon peak & Waiorongomai valley **Grade:**M **Leader:** Alicia Carthew

Trip 3294 Te Aroha/Tui track loop 9 **May** **Grade:** M **Leader:** Alicia Carthew

Mid-week Walks & Tramps

We have a walk or tramp on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of the month. The activities have proven to be as varied as the group is and the communication is via the Mid-week W & Ts Group page on WhatsApp. If you would like to be part of this communication, please download WhatsApp on your phone and text your request to Marion on 021 442 452.

Keeping Moving, Keeping Healthy

Our Mid-Week Walkers group are a friendly group who love to get out and exercise in the company of like minded people. Our latest walk was to celebrate Lesley's birthday milestone. We started and returned to Fitzroy, going via Te Ara PekaPeka Bridge to Hamilton Gardens where we enjoyed birthday cake and friendship. Most of us explored the Gardens for an hour before meeting up again at the Cafe for lunch. From there it was a circular route back to Fitzroy via Cobham Bridge. 10k in all. You cannot beat friendship and convivial times together. Thank you all. Too many to name but you know
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who you are. Val Jones



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Editorial

You are a wonderful bunch of people to be associated with, Not only do you like keeping as fit as you can being in the outdoors and enjoying what you see out there, but also helping to protect your favourite spaces. Please accept a huge thank you from Selwyn and I for your contributions to the baiting operation we manage in the Okahukura valley of Pureora forest. This past weekend we completed a top-up operation in a single day, which represents a magnificent and cooperative effort by 14 club members and 50 volunteers in total. This followed the September fill when 16 of the 46 volunteers were also club members.

Selwyn and I have now received our wonderful Kings' Service Medals and I hope you are proud that your contributions to our mischief resulted in our receiving them. (photos on
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the last page). It was a memorable, informally formal occasion at Government House in Wellington ton Sept 16th to which we were able to take a few of you along to also.

I hope that one day I'll be able to join you all back out in the field with a pack on my back. The up coming trips look like some wonderful places to go and some new ones too. We can never underestimate the advantages of socialising while undertaking an activity together. And when it happens in our great open spaces, who can ask for more? Not me,

Don't forget to keep the politicians on track also by asking relevant questions of them all and ensure they keep our surroundings in the best possible condition for the future.

And one more thing: If you are a trip leader, please send me your description too – it takes me a lot of time to download what is on the website and re-format it for the bulletin. Ta. Dianne

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Presidential blog

It seems that the contact with our President has been lost, in part due to those horrid spam emails that have been interfering with his contact. Then again,bperhaps he is busy out in the field and 'unaware' that it is bulletin blog time again? If anyone knows where he is, please let the editor know.

Waikato Hut

Hut bookings can be made using the sirvoy booking system https://b9c5011ab7bb99eb.sirvoy.me/
All Club members can use the club code, SBENDS26,which is valid for the Winter 2026.
The nightly hut rates until October 30th are as follows: Adult $40 and Child $25. Non-members Adult $60 Child $35.
The summer rates will commence after this time: Adult $30 and Child $20. Non-members Adult $35 Child $25. Valid for the rest of the year.
Far west T is back!The big news from Whakapapa is that **the Far West T-bar is still turning.** It has been running in the afternoons 5th to 9th October after the freeze thaw cycle has softened things up enough out there. It is likely to be on the sporty side to get out there, but the photos of the upper mountain look like there are still good conditions higher up for those prepared to venture off trail and into the back country. We're now getting into that part of the season where picking the right weather window can deliver some very good Ruapehu skiing.
Spring side couintry. Spring can also bring some of the best opportunities of the season for getting beyond the groomed terrain. The western side and higher terrain can be excellent as the snowpack settles into a freeze/thaw cycle. Good spring corn, settled weather and longer daylight can make for memorable days out. But remember: once
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you leave the ski-area boundary you're in backcountry terrain. Conditions can change during the day as the snow warms. Check the NZ Avalanche advisory, weather and freezing level before heading out, carry appropriate equipment, ski with suitable company, and make sure someone knows where you are going.

And perhaps the best bit of spring…..The evenings at the lodge are getting noticeably more social. We're entering the part of the season where sitting on the **balcony for après-ski** starts becoming an attractive proposition rather than an endurance event. A cold drink and the sun hanging around a little longer after a day on the hill is one of the better reasons to spend a spring weekend at the lodge. Whakapapa itself is still planning to operate as long as the snow lasts, weather permitting.So if you've been waiting for the right time to get back to the lodge, October may well be it. The snowpack isn't enormous and spring weather will undoubtedly throw a few curveballs at us, but the upper mountain is skiing, Far West has joined the party, there's more snow in the short-range forecast and some of Ruapehu's best spring skiing could still be ahead. Keep an eye on the Whakapapa report and webcams, pick the weather windows – and we'll hopefully see plenty of you at the lodge over the next few weeks.

See you on the maunga – and hopefully on the balcony afterwards.

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Trip Reports

Trip 3252 **Otanewainuku** **2 Aug**



We walked two tracks at Ōtanewainuku Scenic Reserve: the Summit Track and the Rimu Track, with a visit to the waterfall along the way. When we arrived at the carpark, we saw that the shelter had been taped off after a large tree had fallen onto it, damaging the roof and structure. We climbed to the summit and stood on the viewing tower, where we were
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rewarded with a clear view of snow-covered Mt Ruapehu in the distance. After returning to the carpark we stopped for lunch before heading along the Rimu Track to the waterfall. We enjoyed walking through the beautiful native bush and exploring the different tracks. A great day out exploring Ōtanewainuku, with the unexpceted bonus of seeing Mt Ruapehu covered in snow from the summit. Thanks for everyone's great company.
Trampers - Lynette, Judith, Barb .C, Allan .W, Alisha, Peter.A, David Silva, Kellie B, Bea.M, Julia.L, Maddie.F, Christine.L, Varun, Xavier, Bryce. P. Scribe Cathy D.

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Trip 3257 **Neavesville** **6 Sept**

Expedition Report: Six Go Wild in Neavesville
Date of Mission: Sunday, September 6, 2026
Fearless Leader: Judith Bogle
The Crew: Sandra Steingrimsson, Annie Xi, Julia Lile, Kim Pickering and token but top quality male, Jose
Status: Everyone Survived. Much desire for hot baths.
Report writing: Contributions from entire crew; editing support from Art Intelligence

The Grand Tour (and the Detours)

Judith led our pack of six straight into the wilds of Neavesville with advanced notice of weather being a bit "doggy" (assumed dodgy). In the event the weather was on our side and it turned out to be a fantastic workout, mostly because it was decided the planned route wasn't enough and we opted for a bonus detour, found an entirely new route, and added some quality extra time to the clock. It was a solid day on the feet, but honestly, it was an awesome place most of us wouldn't ordinarily get to see. It turned out that Judith was spot on about it being a bit doggy (4 over-zealous terriers at the beginning of the track, that are hopefully better trained by the time of future trips).

The Terrain & The Tactical Manoeuvres

The 4WD tracks out there are pretty serious—the kind of mud that wants to swallow your boots whole. Stories unfolded of previous travellers that had temporarily become part of the landscape in a 4WD. Luckily, we successfully avoided getting permanently stuck in a rut. If the weather had turned, historic shelters were available to escape the elements, and question our life choices before marching on.

History & Ghost Hunting

Neavesville definitely gets the imagination going. We passed an abandoned wood mill and some old workers' cabins, which brought up a lot of thoughts about the tough folks who used to live out there. You could practically hear the history—or maybe that was just our joints cracking.

The Views & The Paparazzi Report

The effort paid off with some truly spectacular views stretching all the way out to the Tairua River Estuary and amazing cliffs, with some regeneration around the sawmill area of Kauri trees.
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We also had some excellent wildlife spotting (and hearing):

- **Spotted:** Harriers, Kererū, and... a random peacock on the way home? (No one checked his tramping permit).
- Heard: Grey warblers and Tūī cheering us on (or laughing at us).

Trip 3259B **Miranda** **19/20 Sep**

Birdwatching and culinary retreat"

The five of us, tightly packed in the car (like sardines), bright and early, are heading out of town on our way to Pūkorokoro Miranda Shorebird Center. As we arrive with time to spare, first stop is " The Pink Shop" in Kaiaua for refreshments. Then off to the Shorebird center where our guide Trudy takes us on a tremendously interesting tour to watch the Godwits, which migrate all the way from Siberia nonstop to New Zealand, fly in from their feeding grounds along the coast to rest in the shallow waters of the wetlands. We enjoyed watching all sorts of different bird species through a telescope. Thousands of birds.

Back at the center we claim our comfortable accommodation and then heading out for fish and chips, again at Kaiaua.Then we travel across to Thames to walk the **Waiomu Kauri Grove** track to the lookout. We enjoy a nice 2.5 hour walk with great views and beautiful bush, despite the misty weather.

Come dinner time, we devour delicious dinners at (have a guess), "Kaiaua" **Pub**. Very nice 10 out of 10.

Playing games back at our accommodation is also a highlight .

Following a leisurely start in the morning, we visit the quirky Water gardens at Ngatea. Much enjoyed by everyone.

After more culinary treats and some shopping we are heading back to Hamilton and beyond.

An exceptional trip, well organized by our leader, camp mother and driver, Madeleine . Lots of thanks from the happy trampers/explorers.

Wendy, Zoe, John and Bea

Trip 3260 **Taupiri Scientific Reserve** **28 Sept**

Assuming that we were in for a rainy trip, seven of us donned our wet weather gear and travelled in two cars from Hamilton to the end of Old Road. Fortunately, the road actually goes further and higher than shown on maps, and Selwyn had done a reconnaissance, working out the best route to follow. He had decided against the original plan of a loop, which would have included crossing a steep sided gully with a swampy bottom.

The rain conveniently stopped and we climbed the ridge heading north to the junction with the main range, which lies east west at that point. Selwyn wasn't confident that he was well enough to continue, so gave us our instructions and ensured that we had maps, compasses and apps to enable us to carry on without him. The track had markers from



previous predator control operations and Selwyn had added a few markers too, so most of the time it was easy to follow. With John in charge, we went east and then north following markers to finally find the last pink tape that Selwyn had tied to a tree. There were a few small kauri there, some much bigger than the very young ones we'd seen so far. Although we were following ridges we were mostly protected from the wind, with no rain reaching us through the rees and we enjoyed seeing all the secondary growth along the way. The trees were predominantly young tanekaha, with kanuka, rimu, miro, totara, kohekohe, rewarewa and a number of young kauri also. Retracing our steps a little, we found a comfortable location for lunch, continuing to feel fortunate that the rain was staying away. Any views we had of the surrounding area were obscured by cloud, denying us the opportunity to see kauri which Selwyn had told us wewre tall enough to identify in the bush canopy. We returned to the junction and headed further west to spot height 231, passing a larger kauri and many smaller ones. The recent wet weather meant that the track was muddy in places and this was a little challenging at times. Caution was needed and occasionally sitting down and sliding was the best option! Doubling back to the junction we descended the ridge to the road and the cars. About 10 minutes before the end we had brief, light drizzle which emphasised how lucky we'd been with our weather. We'd covered a distance of 10km and with stops for snacks and lunch had spent around five hours in the bush. Thanks to Selwyn for introducing us to a new area,

to John for taking over the leadership and to everyone for their good company.

Participants were: Selwyn, Sandra, Nicola, Lynley, Marcia, John and Jean (scribe).



Clematis on the kauri Photo by Jean Wilson

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From the committee table:

No new members or resignations this month.

Membership: The club has 198 tramping members.

From the club captain: If you are **picking up a club PLB** from Bivouac please ensure the staff are aware that you are a club member as they get the device from a different box to those the business hires out to the general public – who have to pay

FMC Concession cards: WTC members looking for their FMC card, these will be
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available at the next club night. If you cannot make it to the event, please contact John at *carthur@outlook.com* to arrange to pick up your card from his place in Hillcrest.

Snippets

- The **South Island Kōkako** Charitable Trust was established in May 2010 to confirm that the remarkable South Island kōkako exists … so that it can be conserved appropriately. The South Island kōkako is an ancient bird once widespread in southern New Zealand forests and it was listed as extinct until 2013 when its status was reclassified as 'data deficient' by the Department of Conservation. The re-classification provides renewed hope and energy. The search is urgent; if South Island kōkako still exist there will be very few left and they need to be found and protected. The Trust's focus is on proving definitively that the kōkako exists and our work includes searching for the bird in areas where compelling reports of encounters have been made. We continue to seek the best means of finding the bird sooner and more efficiently, and fundraising to continue the project. In January 2017 a public search campaign was launched and a $10,000 reward is on offer for evidence leading to confirmation that the South Island kōkako exists. Around 140 encounters were reported to the Trust during 2017 and 2018, some with sightings, many with kōkako like calls heard, many probably or possibly our bird. We're asking all those enjoying the native forests of South and Stewart Islands to report possible encounters to the Trust through our website, and to use the map to help inform backcountry trips and new search efforts. Please keep a camera or phone handy and record and then share any possible encounters you may have with us. We have five recent reports of possible encounters with a South Island kōkako to share with you. Two were in Fiordland, one from Mt Aspiring hut, one in South Westland up the Waiatoto River, and one interesting one from a couple of years ago on the Heaphy Track.
- Les' Youtube site: If you Google "Wilderness Hiking" you don't need to go through the long way to get to the right channel any more. ny nice feedback is welcome.
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The club trailer is available for hire to club members for a reasonable rate. It is kept at a location very handy to Hamilton city. Please contact Allan Wickens for more details.
Ph; 027 9509546 or email:

allanwickens@hotmail.com

EXPLORE RUAPEHU

A weekend of mountain activities

Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th November

with uplifting live music from



Jon Sanders



Sarah Marlowe Spence

Jamon



A residential weekend of exploration, film and music

Go online at wtc.org for more details and pricing (look up the event on our Calendar - it is trip number 3267).

All guests must be registered for this event

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….. *from DoC……*

62 more huts and campsites have been added to the online booking system. The changes are part of DoC's ongoing work to make it easier for people to plan their naturing and pay for stays at huts and campsites. 32 huts and hut-side campsites opened for bookings on October 1st for stays from 1 November. Most are on busy sections of Te Araroa in Canterbury and Nelson/Tasman. A further 30 huts and campsites around the country opened for bookings on 1 September, for stays from 1 October. DoC Visitor Services Manager Cameron Hyland sencouraged people heading to these places over summer to plan ahead and book before they go. "Making more facilities bookable helps reduce overcrowding at some of our busier places and gives our teams a better picture of how facilities are being used. It also means we can communicate directly with people who have bookings when there is important information they need to know." The latest additions include huts and campsites in Arthur's Pass National Park and along the St James Walkway, as well as a number of huts through Richmond Forest Park used by Te Araroa walkers. The changes mark a milestone, with all DoC serviced huts now bookable. As a result, serviced Hut Tickets are being retired. People who have already bought physical Serviced Hut Tickets can contact DoC to have them applied to a booking until the ticket's expiry date.

Backcountry Hut Tickets moving online. From 1 November, paying to stay at DoC's

non-bookable backcountry huts will also become easier, with Backcountry Hut Tickets available through DoC's online booking system. People will no longer need to visit a DoC Visitor Centre or participating retailer to buy a paper ticket before heading away. The price of a standard Backcountry Hut Ticket will remain $15 per adult, per night. "When buying an electronic hut ticket, people will select the hut they intend to stay at and the date of their stay, then save or print the confirmation before heading into the backcountry, where mobile coverage may be limited," says Cameron. "It's important to remember this isn't a booking. Non-bookable huts will continue to work exactly as they do now – bunks are first come, first served. The ticket is simply proof you've paid your hut fee. If a hut is full, or weather or another safety issue means you need to change your plans, people should always do what they need to do to stay safe." Existing physical Backcountry Hut Tickets will continue to be accepted during a 12-month transition period, until 1 November 2027, while paper tickets are phased out. People who cannot purchase online themselves can ask someone to purchase on their behalf or contact a DoC Visitor Centre for assistance. "Hut fees contribute to looking after DoC's backcountry hut network, so making it easier for people to pay is good for visitors and helps support the ongoing care of these facilities," says Cameron. Backcountry huts remain unlocked and available as emergency shelter to anyone who needs them, regardless of whether they have a booking or have purchased a hut ticket. DoC continues to provide a mix of bookable and non-bookable huts. Of the roughly 950 huts DOC manages around the country, the majority remain non-bookable. People should check individual hut and campsite pages on the DOC website before heading out for the latest information, including whether a booking is required.

Kiwi in Tongariro Forest are more vulnerable after vandals burned and smashed ferret traps vital to protecting the birds. 4 traps were burned, and a fifth was believed to have been run over by a vehicle, on a track not far from the popular 42 Traverse. It's believed the vandalism occurred in mid-September. DoC Biodiversity Ranger Jerome Guillotel says it's frustrating to see senseless vandalism undermining kiwi conservation efforts. "I do find the odd trap smashed or stolen, but this seems more deliberate and malicious. It's bad for the kiwi, every trap removed from operation leaves them a little more vulnerable to introduced predators." Jerome estimates more than 600 brown kiwi call Tongariro Forest home. "It's a place where we have a huge focus on predator control to allow kiwi to thrive. It also means, over the last four years, we've been able to supplement the population with around 350 kiwi from Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari – because we know they'll generally be safe here." The vandalised traps formed part of a range of measures aimed at protecting Tongariro Forest kiwi from introduced predators like ferrets. 3-yearly aerial 1080 operations also keep introduced predator numbers low, protecting native species like whio and kiwi. Jerome says even one ferret can wreak havoc in a short amount of time."Unlike most other introduced predators, ferrets can kill fully grown kiwi. In 2018 a single ferret in Tongariro Forest

killed 10 monitored kiwi in just three months, so the traps are a critical part of preventing this kind of loss."

Hundreds of hectares of weed and deer control have been conducted across the **Tongariro landscape since last year's fires**, but there's still much to do. Extensive fires in late 2025 destroyed more than 3000 hectares of slow-growing alpine ecosystems in a blow to the dual World Heritage-listed Tongariro National Park. Since then, DoC and others have been working to protect the recovering landscape from introduced weeds and browsers such as deer and hares. DoC Operations Manager Libby O'Brien says the native plants of Tongariro are resilient and are recovering well. "We're seeing things like flax recovering quickly, but the plants here are still really vulnerable to being overgrown by weeds. We're working with iwi, weed and deer control contractors, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, and adjacent landowners, to ensure Tongariro has its best shot at natural recovery. "There's been aerial and ground-based weed control and deer control, and we're using drones to detect pests and monitor landscape change over time. We're pulling out all the tools to get the work done." More than 250 ha of weed control have been conducted, and 91 deer have been removed from the area, with 25 delivered to a local marae for kai. In February, $3.5 million in International Visitor Levy (IVL) funding was allocated, over five years, to the recovery of the Tongariro landscape, which includes the world-renowned Tongariro Alpine Crossing. The IVL is a way for international visitors to contribute to the places they love. Libby says Tongariro and its recovery are culturally, economically, and socially important to the community. "We want everyone on board, so we're inviting our communities to an open day. All are welcome to join us on 16 October 2026 at 10am at the Blue Mountain Adventure Centre in Raurimu, to connect, learn, and hear more about the recovery work being done." Further community open day details and RSVP can be found on the DoC Tongariro Facebook page. Looking forward, Libby still expects to see plenty of yellow this year. "We haven't eradicated the weeds, so we can still expect to see plenty of yellow broom flowering in the park. This is a long-term project, and it will take time to see results. "Over time, we expect the scar on the landscape to slowly disappear, replaced by native plants." Visitors to Tongariro can help by respecting the 10-year restorative rāhui placed over the fire-affected area by Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro. This includes staying on (open) tracks, keeping shoes and gear clean to prevent weed spread, not entering fire-affected areas off-track, and taking all rubbish with you.



Meeting the
Governor-General
The investiture party
Hers and his medals.



