

WAIKATO RIVER TRAIL – Maraetai to Waipapa

Topo50 Map: BF35 Whakamaru

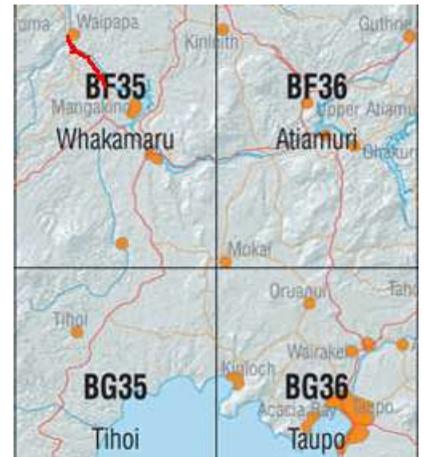
GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo northwards on SH1 and turn off at the top of Control Gates Hill left to Poihipi Road:

- follow Poihipi to the end
- turn right on SH32 to Whakamaru then
- left on SH30, head to and pass both roads signposted off right to Mangakino
- turn off right towards Maraetai Power Station
- pass the road going off right
- drop trampers at the gravel road on the left at a sharp bend (WP01^{253masl})
- have the transport moved to the picnic area at Waipapa Reserve just before Waipapa Dam

Time taken from Taupo Police Station is just under one hour and the tramp line shows in red on sheet BF35 on the right.

Rough Description: A straightforward walk of 14km over 4- 5 hours on good quality forest roads and track which now comprise part of the Waikato River Trail MTB track. The only warnings are that the track can be slippery in places so “boots for sky” can happen and in the summer time it can get rather warm so a good supply of drinking water should be carried – you are close to the river but high above it.



Detail: The outing starts off by passing through the gate on to the gravel road which immediately heads up-hill; this section of the road is superb and often has a coating of pine needles. There is little to say about the first hour as it is very pleasant easy walking with the odd bend (WP02^{238masl}), a track joining (WP03^{272masl}) plus the odd view (WP04^{246masl}) of the river valley on your right through rolling to hilly terrain. A white post (WP05^{244masl}) marks the halfway distance between Mangakino and Waipapa – as the trail includes road walking from Mangakino, the first part is best avoided by starting at Maraetai.



There is a clearly marked right turn (WP06^{230masl}) then the fun can start as some of the zig zags (WP07^{197masl} and WP09) can be slippery and are not liked by some bikers and walkers as they can lead to “wheels or boots to sky” – this term was favoured in Africa in the 1970s to describe crashed over-turned vehicles!



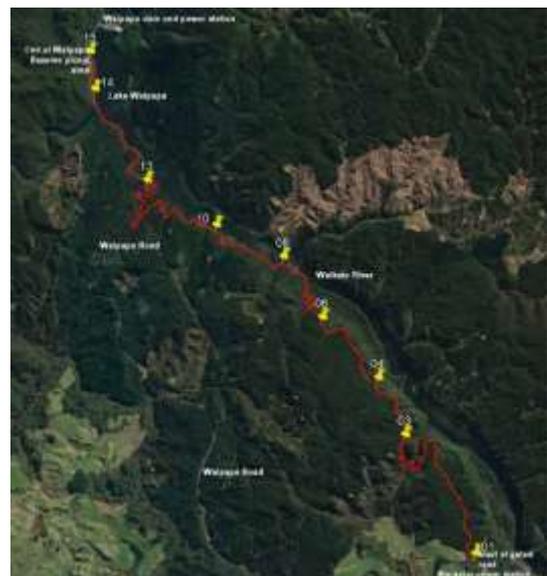
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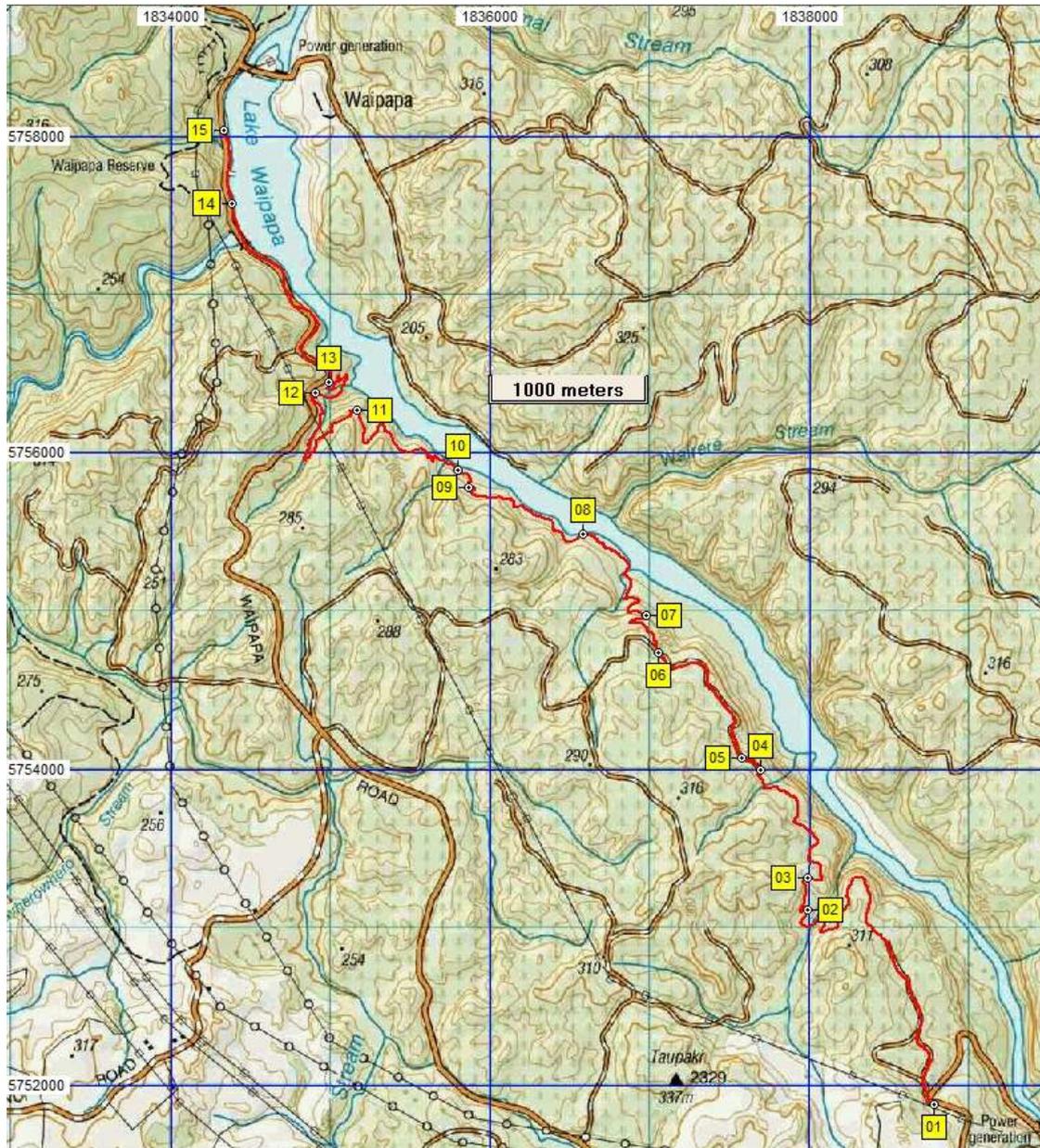


There is a good view of the river, Lake Waipapa, and valley after about 2 hours (WP08^{126masl}) but be careful as the track is both rocky and slippery here. Whilst very close to the river there is short section of board-walk (WP10^{126masl}) which passes below a huge rock / bluff before more zig zags (WP11^{185masl}) lead upwards to the SW to cross a minor valley. About now the birdlife, which is pretty good throughout, may get drowned out by traffic noise as the track lies directly below the highway (WP12^{157masl}).

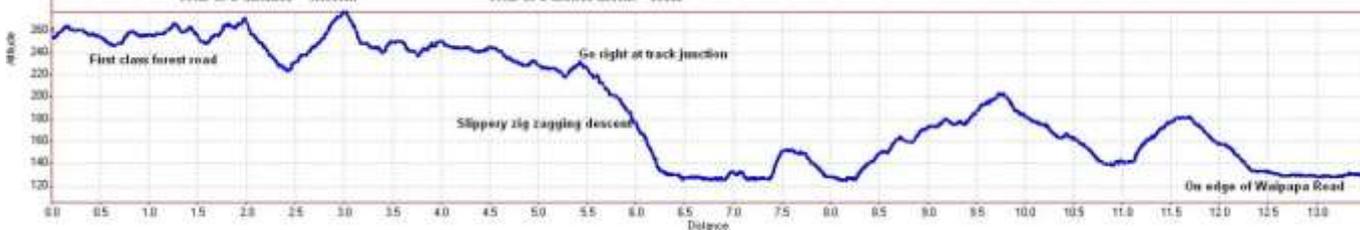


From here there is a steady ascent until one finds oneself right on the edge of Waipapa Road (WP13^{177masl}). For the next couple of kilometres the walk is less pleasant as it often hugs the edge of the highway – but far enough away to be safe from the traffic. Just short of 14km brings sight of the signs for Waipapa Scenic Reserve the picnic area (WP15^{130masl}) with ample parking, seats and tables and a DoC toilet come into view.





Total GPS distance = 13.60km Total GPS metres ascent = 336m



N	Easting	Northing	Alt	Description
01	1838779	5751882	253	Park at gate on LHS of the road to Maraetai power-station approx 1km from Waipapa Road
02	1837983	5753113	238	2.6km (41min); Pronounced bend to the left on good forest road
03	1837993	5753314	272	2.9km (48min); Uncleared track joins from the left
04	1837693	5754000	246	3.6km (1:07min); View of Waikato River valley on RHS high above river
05	1837572	5754077	244	4.2km (1:11min); MTB marker post for halfway from Mangakino to Waipapa
06	1837049	5754739	230	5.4km (1:38min); Junction, go right and downhill
07	1836975	5754978	197	5.9km (1:46min); Slippery zig zag bends downslope
08	1836583	5755487	126	6.8km (2:03min); Good view of river but track rocky and slippery
09	1835862	5755789	140	7.8km (2:24min); More zig zagging downslope
10	1835793	5755891	126	8.1km (2:29min); Section of boardwalk below bluff rocks then zig zag upslope
11	1835164	5756271	185	9.5km (3:00hrs); Long zig zags upslope to head SW to cross side valley
12	1834910	5756388	157	10.6km (3:20min); More zig zags directly below Waipapa Road
13	1834989	5756453	177	11.5km (3:55min); Edge of Waipapa Road
14	1834379	5757581	129	13km (4:15min); Track moves away from the edge of the road for a few metres
15	1834328	5758044	130	13.5km (4:23min); Picnic area with DoC toilet on LHS of Waipapa Road just short of the dam

Notes:

- **GPS:** Garmin GPSMap 66sc
- **WP =** Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl =** metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS units)

Compiled 16 August 2018