

## JUNCTION TOP above WAIPAKIHI HUT

Topo50 Map: BH36 Motutere

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

### How to get to START:

This tramp starts at the Waipakihī Hut in the Kaimanawa so the first thing is to get there via the Umukarikari Track.

- Exit Taupo down the lake on **SH1** through **Turangi** on to the **Desert Highway (SH1)** for 15 km.
- Turn left off Desert Highway to **Kaimanawa Road** signed to Rangipo Power Station
- Kaimanawa Forest Park sign on the road then turn left on to gravel track signed **Umukarikari** and over wooden bridge.
- Turn right at next **Umukarikari** sign for the car park
- Track leaves through wooden gate on the upslope side

The location can be seen opposite as a red line between the yellow waypoints WP1 is Waipakihī Hut and WP9 is Junction Top. The walk in to the hut covers over 12km needing about 6 hours and is at least in the moderate class.

**Rough description:** Junction Top itself is on private land and a permit has to be obtained before setting off. The walk up and down takes 4 to 5 hours depending on the ability to tackle a steep climb on a very rough back country track. The first part is in thick bush but most of the walk is on open ridge from where there are fantastic views. There can be slight confusion at the top where one can imagine one has gone past Junction top towards Te Raketuangiangi.

The hut is a delight in being perfectly situated to catch the evening sun, has great views, two bunk rooms which hold six bodies each on squeaky bunk beds, good roof-water supply with inside and outside sinks, really good wood-burner with plentiful fuel supply – and the place was spotless with no rubbish seen at all plus the “threatened” resident mouse did NOT make an appearance. There are good signs outside indicating the rather long alternative routes out via the river to Waipakihī Road (8–10 hours), Kiko Road (8–10 hours), Kiko Road (8–10 hours) and the Cascade Hut – via private land (8-10 hours).

### The Waipakihī Hut

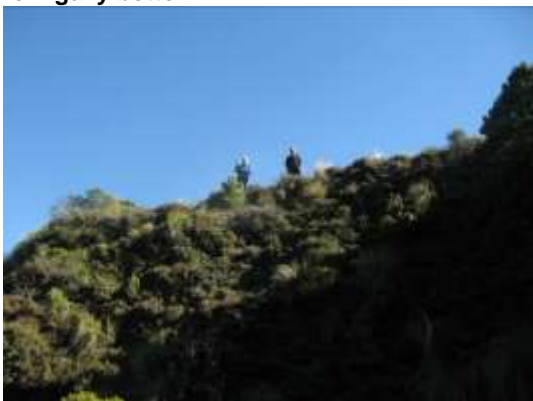


### Kitchen area



**Detail:** After a good night's sleep to recover from whichever route was followed to get to the hut (**WP01**<sup>1117masl</sup>) ensure water is carried as there is none obvious after crossing the first stream in the gully (**WP02**<sup>1114masl</sup>) which lies just metres to the south of the hut. This is a deep gully with a track that is vanishing under vigorous vegetation and often the footfall cannot be seen so care is needed. There is an old wooden sign at the lip of the gully for Junction Top. To get to this virtually hidden track get off the hut deck, turn left and go up the side of the hut to stumble over the track going off steeply downhill into the gully on the right.

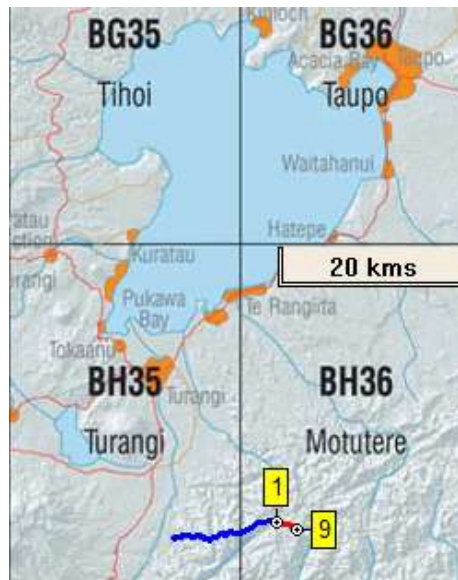
### View from gully bottom



### Climbing out of the gully



Through the gully and immediately above it the track is very rough, not at all marked so progress is slow but soon the vegetation thins and walking eases. Within 45 minutes or so there is a small crest on this very rugged track (**WP03**<sup>1245masl</sup>) which offers a good place to catch the breath and admire the expanding views. The next locational feature is a rather indistinct junction (**WP4a**<sup>1335masl</sup>) which goes off left. Stay right as the track is clearer and within a couple of hundred metres another small junction (**WP4b**<sup>1357masl</sup>) indicates this branch rejoining the main track.



Half an hour later and after even more steady ascending there is a small level section (**WP05**<sup>1364masl</sup>) on the ridge which again offers views and a suitable place to recover the composure. A further kilometre on and up the track begins to sidle off to the left and just north of east. It is best to ignore this very indistinct junction (**WP06**<sup>1526masl</sup>) and branch off the clear track heading straight up the rather steeply sloping ridge. If the track to the left is followed then turn hard right at a small eroded, rocky stream (**WP07**<sup>1529masl</sup>) heading steeply uphill to the SE to rejoin the track which comes up the snout of the ridge.

**Ruapehu backdrop**

**Unrelenting, rugged and steep**



Minutes later a small, low cairn (**WP08**<sup>1573masl</sup>) with a Hobbit sized track notice is reached and shown in the pictures below. There are bearings (in degrees) and distances to named places from here:

- Te Raketuangi (1605m) at one kilometre on 162 degrees and the sign points directly at a very obvious small rocky hill. This small rocky hill is actually Junction Top (1605masl) and is only 300 metres distant. Te Raketuangi is some 700 metres due south of Junction Top
- Waipakihi Hut at one hour, 2.1km distant on 257 degrees (this was where this walk started), and
- Rangiteiki River 1.8km distant in one hour on 47 degrees (study of the map would indicate this is via Ignimbrite Saddle and a tad further than 1.8km)

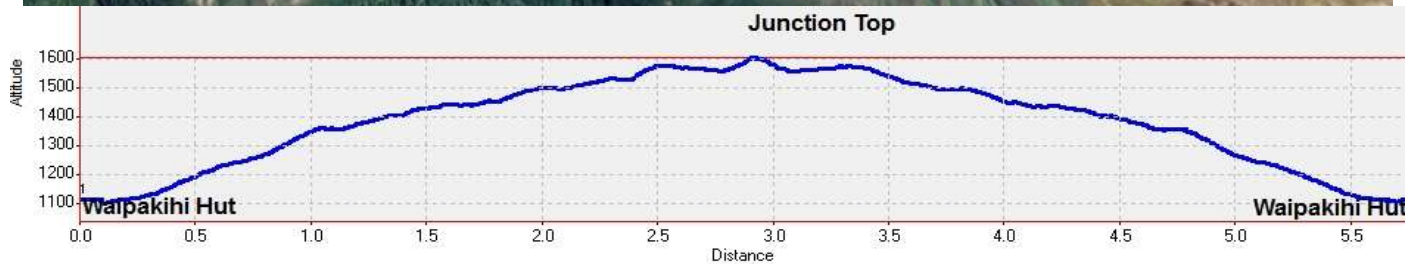
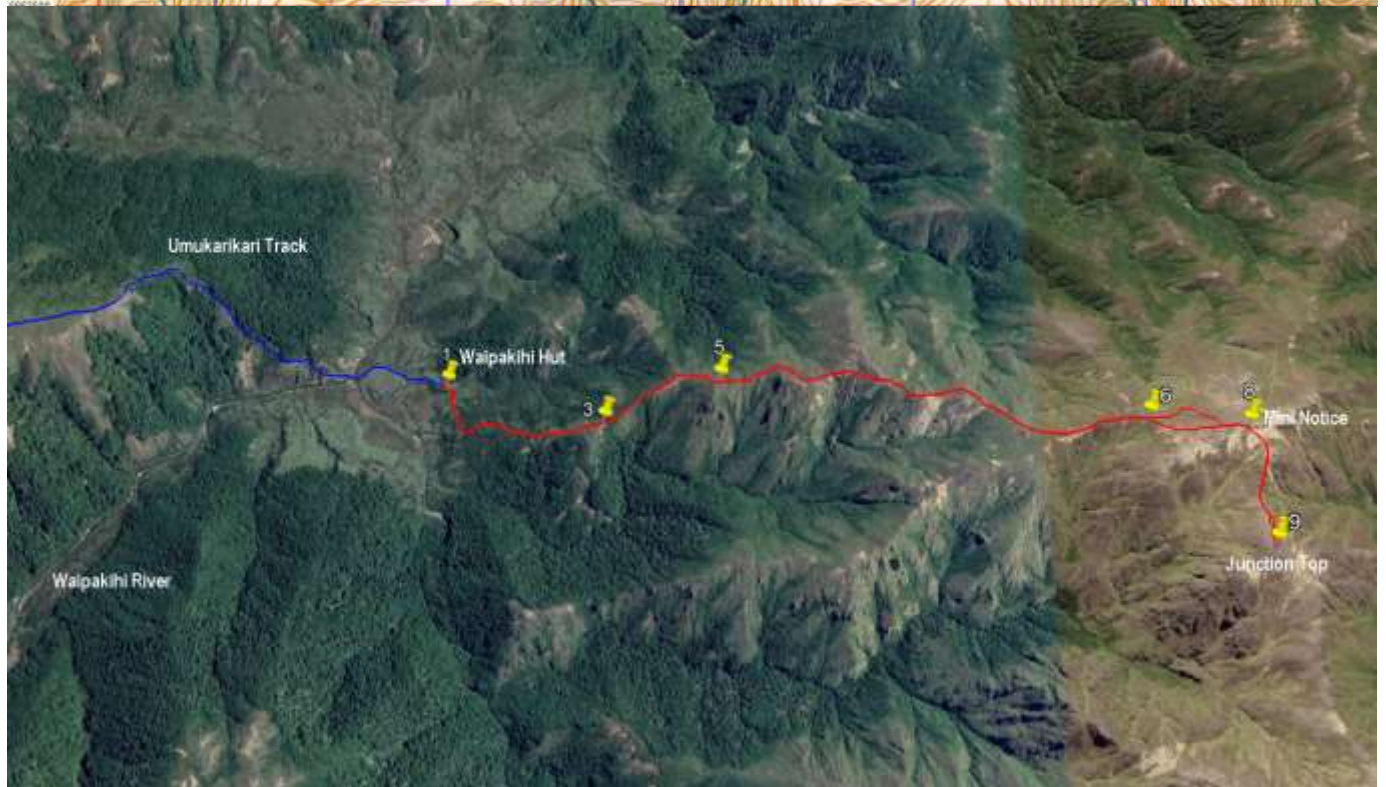
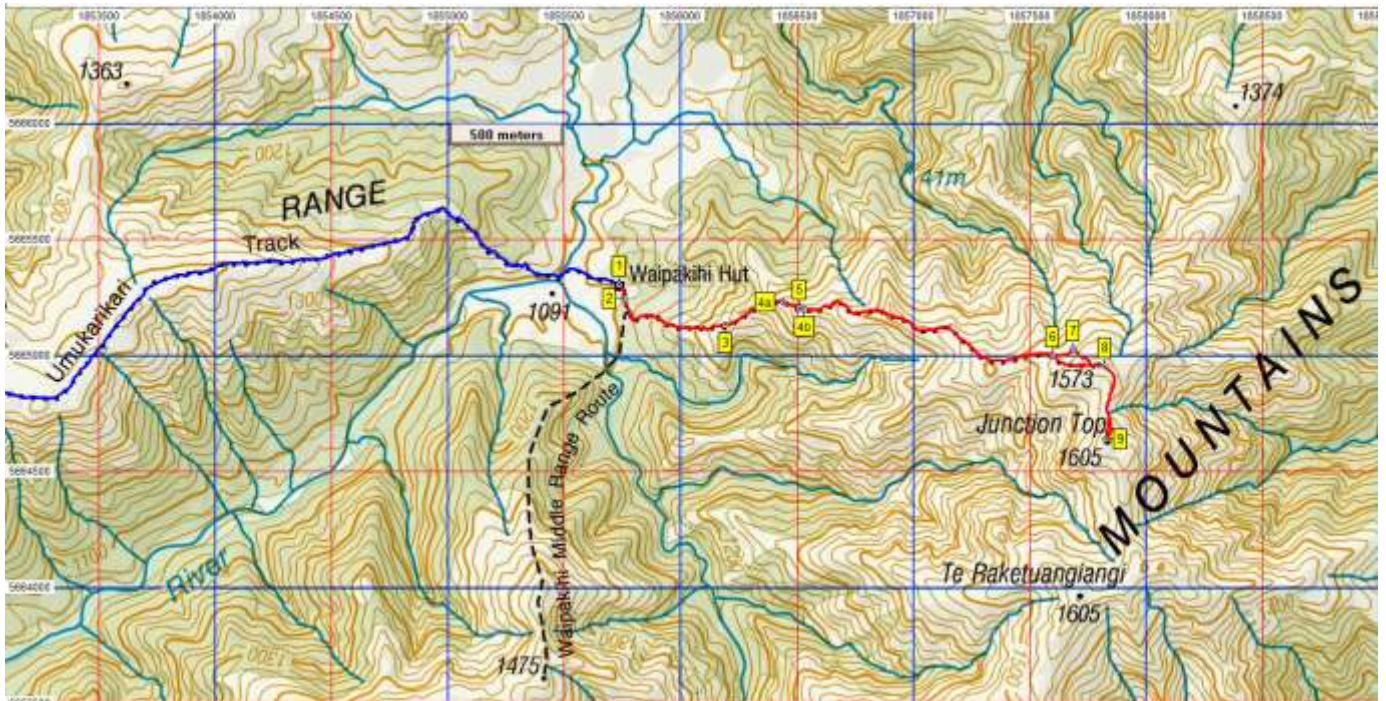
**Where to go**



There is a small dip from the notice board before the relatively easy, rocky slope of Junction Top is ascended with the top (**WP09**<sup>1601masl</sup>) being easily reached in ten to fifteen minutes. The descent back down to Waipakihi Hut is obviously quicker than the ascent taking about 1:50 minutes including numerous photo-stops.

**At the Hobbit sized notice below Junction Top**





<b>Notes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GPS</b> Garmin GPSmap 62sc</li> <li>• <b>WP</b> = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit</li> <li>• <b>masl</b> = metres above sea level</li> </ul>	<b>Total distance</b> 5.7km <b>Total Ascent</b> 590m <b>Total time</b> 4:58min
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