

CASCADE TRACK and HUT

Topo50 Map: BH36 Motutere

NZTM GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH5 for Napier

- In about 20 – 25 minutes turn right into Taharua Road
 - Another 7– 8 minutes right into Clements Mill Road which quickly becomes gravel
 - Around 10 minutes on this gravel, forest road pass Te Iringa car park on the left
 - About 2km further on you come to a “White Bridge” – wooden and pale coloured
 - Several other small camp grounds and car parks are then passed
 - 1 hour 20 min end of Clements Mill Road with toilet – park here (CT01 on the right)
- Total driving time to the start is roughly 1:15 min to 1:20 min and it must be noted that the alignment of the last 2 kilometres of Clements Mill Road is not as shown on the 1:50,000 scale topographic map. These alignment irregularities have been corrected on the map presented below – but the new NZTM was still incorrect in 2014.

Rough description: This is a moderate overnight tramp of about 12km each way which can be made into an out-and-back day tramp. There are some pretty steep slopes and an overall altitude range of over 525m through dense native forest. The track is quite well marked with “orange” reflectives though largely un-maintained and care has to be taken, especially on wet days, as the many exposed roots can be lethal to the unwary. Views are not a big feature though there is a good waterfall within a gorge plus a glimpse of Lake Taupo for the observant. Total walk time into Cascade Hut including breaks is 5 - 6 hours though for the young and fit this can be reduced somewhat. The hut has 6 bunks, internal sink and water supply plus a wood / coal burner. The return trip is no quicker than inwards as it is a pretty hefty grunt back up from the Tauranga Taupo River.

Detail: From the car park (CH01 720masl) leave by the marked track in the back right hand corner and within minutes pass over a small wooden bridge heading S then SW before swinging round on to a SE bearing. Within 10 – 12 minutes there is a swing bridge (CH02 715masl) to cross then you start gaining altitude and 10 minutes later the actual track and the mapped track coincide. In 25–30 minutes whilst walking parallel to the stream line there is a small branch path off to the left – this leads to overlook a gorge and waterfall (CH03 726masl) – there is then a short scramble back up to the main path and back-tracking is not really necessary. From here on the going gets a bit rougher. In 40min there is a steep drop on the left (CH04 752masl) and several short, steep slopes are encountered - roots form acceptable ladders up and down (CH05 750masl and CH06 756masl). In just under one hour there is a gully (CH07 766masl) on the right which passes under the path you are on, you are on a root bridge. Two minutes later turn right (CH08 771masl) upstream in a rocky stream line with a bit of a tricky exit at the top left. There is a minor stream crossing after about 1:10 min when quite a deeply incised stream with steep lower slopes (CH09 763masl) is met then there is a possible feet-wetting river to cross (CH10 770masl) 10 minutes after this. Serious ascending now starts but there is a short respite at just on 2 hours (CH11 860masl) then a really “grunty” ascent of about 12 minutes’ duration is tackled to get on to a slightly less sloping SW trending ridge and the first crest is reached in 2:20min (CH13 956masl). Another high point (CH16 1104masl) is reached within 2:45 minutes or so when there is a view of Lake Taupo to the right then there is a rocky patch on the path as it ascends again but it eases after a very steep grunt and is undulating (CH17 1153masl). Just when the mind thinks the top has been reached there is a descent to a small saddle (CH18 1155masl) then a last gasp grunt for 10 minutes to reach the top (CH19 1234masl). This is a good lunch spot and there are views of the hills and valley plus river to the SE. What you think is a long descent now begins but, be warned; some uphill is involved on the descent!

Cascades track



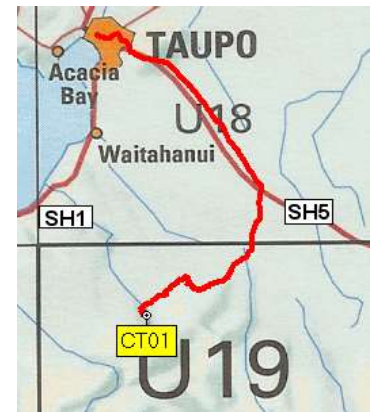
Soon after the windfalls the serious descending does start with quite a few “knee-trembling” bits for the next 30 minutes. However, be comforted by the thought that this slope has to be ascended the next morning – assuming the plan is to exit on the same route and not go out via Te Iringa or elsewhere.

From the crest set off downhill with one or two tricky bits, steep bits plus gently undulating bits but within 10 minutes ascending resumes reaching another crest (CH20 1144masl) in 3:50 minutes. The gradual undulating descent on the SW trending ridge continues for 30 minutes or so passing over a few minor crests on the way (CH21 1063masl – where the ridge is quite narrow but carries large mature beech and then a few old windfalls are encountered (CH22 1004masl) but the DOC saws have made this easy.

Up the side of the stream WP CH08



Access



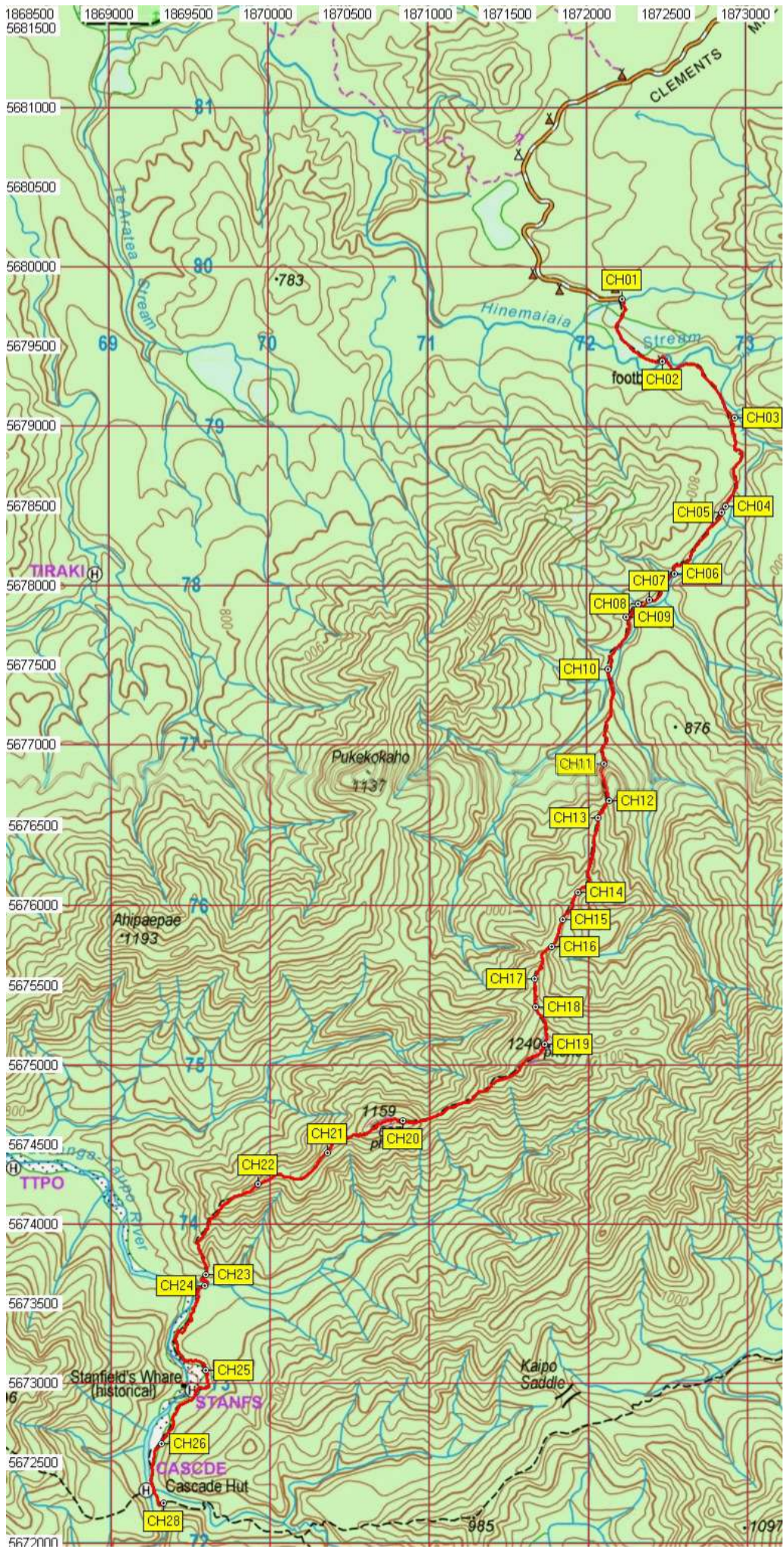
NB The above is not accurately geo-registered hence the GPS trace does not follow the mapped SH5

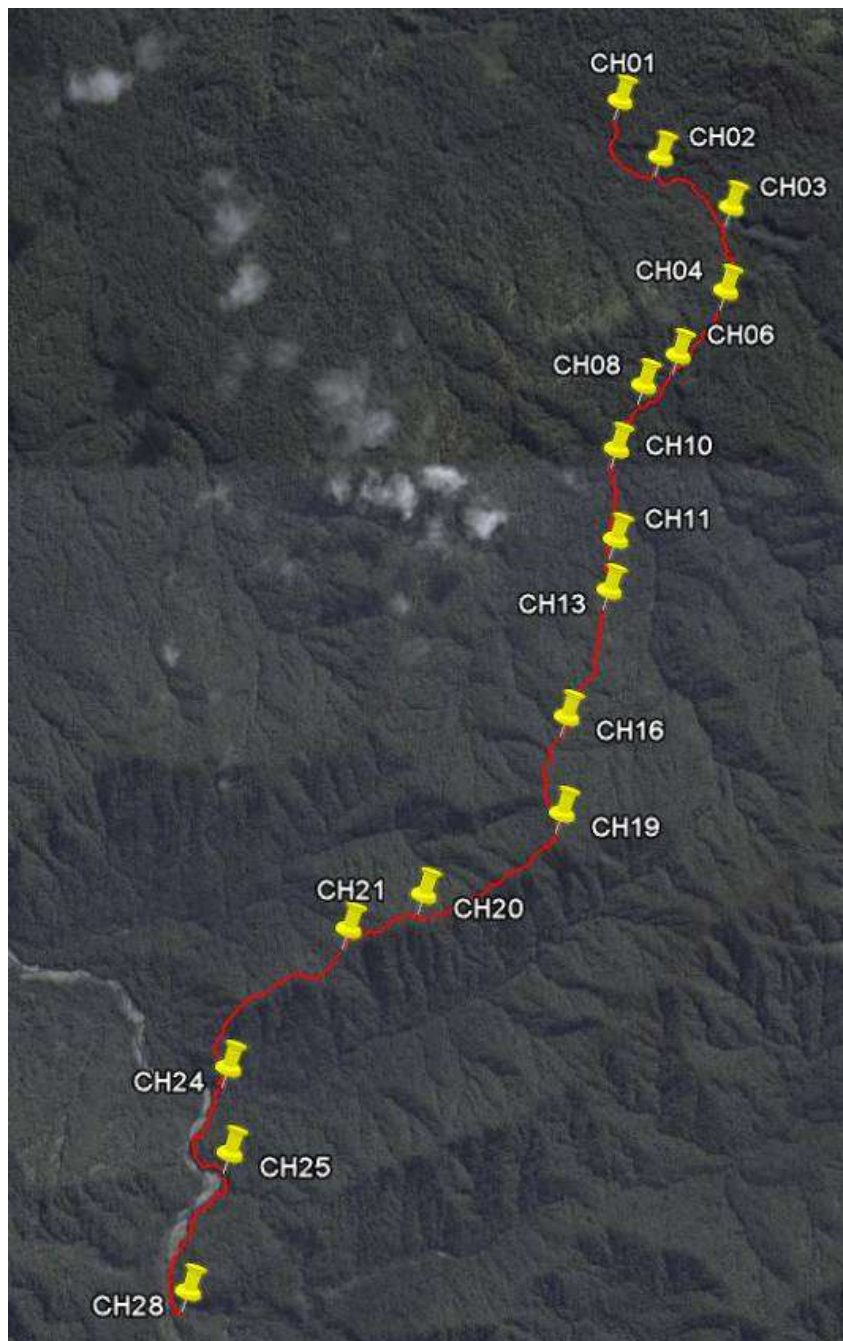
Root ladder



You descend and climb this one!

The descent is nearly over when the first real anti-hobbit step of the day (CH23 785masl) is encountered. Soon after this make sure the hands are free as there is a very steep lower section to descend and walking poles just get in the way – keep hands free to use the ample supply of exposed roots for handholds.





| Name | Eastings | Northing | Alt... | Description |
|------|----------|----------|--------|---|
| CH01 | 1872220 | 5679778 | 726 | Car park with toilet at end of Clements Mill Road (NB Road misaligned on map) |
| CH02 | 1872474 | 5679408 | 715 | 12min (0.7km); Swing bridge |
| CH03 | 1872927 | 5679055 | 726 | 28min (1.4km); Divert off to left for glimpse of falls and gorge |
| CH04 | 1872872 | 5678496 | 752 | 40min (2km); Path on cliff edge on the left so be aware |
| CH05 | 1872847 | 5678460 | 750 | 43min (2.1km); Steep descent and re-ascent using roots etc as ladder |
| CH06 | 1872549 | 5678078 | 756 | 55min (2.6km); Steep descent with root ladder etc |
| CH07 | 1872393 | 5677912 | 766 | 1 hour (2.8km); Gully which tunnels under track from right |
| CH08 | 1872321 | 5677886 | 771 | 1:02-1:05min (3km); In stream line heading upstream to cross |
| CH09 | 1872248 | 5677800 | 763 | 1:12min (3.2km); Incised stream crossing with steep lower slopes |
| CH10 | 1872137 | 5677463 | 768 | 1:20min (3.6km); River crossing - wet feet NOT necessary unless high rainfall |
| CH11 | 1872111 | 5676880 | 860 | 2 hours; Level section on long ascent |
| CH12 | 1872127 | 5676661 | 903 | 2:05min (4.8km); More or less level section after a bit of a grunt up |
| CH13 | 1872060 | 5676551 | 956 | 2:10min (5km); Crest at top of fairly grunty ascent |
| CH14 | 1871931 | 5676082 | 1049 | 2:27min (5.6km); On SSW trending ridge and almost level walking |
| CH15 | 1871835 | 5675915 | 1078 | 2:40 min; Gently undulating after long grunt which does ease nearer top |
| CH16 | 1871767 | 5675746 | 1104 | 2:45min (6km); High point with view of Lake Taupo to the WNW |
| CH17 | 1871660 | 5675541 | 1153 | 2:55 min; Gently undulating after very steep grunt upwards |
| CH18 | 1871666 | 5675364 | 1155 | 3:05min (6.5km); Saddle before steep uphill grunt to crest |
| CH19 | 1871712 | 5675101 | 1234 | 3:14min (6.9km); High point before steep tricky descent to river if going on to Cascade Hut |
| CH20 | 1870835 | 5674649 | 1144 | 3:50min (7.6km); Crest after gentle down, steep down, undulating plus grunty ascent |
| CH21 | 1870356 | 5674449 | 1063 | 4:10min (8.2km); Gentle crest on long ridge with beech trees then narrower ridge with river view |
| CH22 | 1869926 | 5674251 | 1004 | 4:23min (8.75km); Up and over several old windfalls |
| CH23 | 1869593 | 5673684 | 785 | 4:55min (9.6km); Huge anti-hobbit step near bottom of seriously grunty slope |
| CH24 | 1869589 | 5673612 | 754 | 5 hours (9.8km); Log bridge on minor stream, quite safe and not slippery |
| CH25 | 1869594 | 5673085 | 768 | 5:15min (10.6km); On river edge opposite Stanfield's Whare, then meadow and landslip area to left |
| CH26 | 1869318 | 5672624 | 765 | 5:25min (11.2km); Into open on poled track through grassland then back into trees |
| CH27 | 1869271 | 5672327 | 772 | 5:35min (11.5km); River crossing of Cascade Stream, calf to knee deep not too swift |
| CH28 | 1869329 | 5672251 | 779 | 5:40min (11.7km); Cascade Hut |

Once down the steep lower slope there is a minor stream to cross but this one is easy as there is a tree acting as a bridge (**CH24** 754masl) – slightly uphill slope but not slippery even in wet weather. Minutes after this the edge of the Tauranga Taupo river is reached and at about 5:15 minutes total time the old building that can be seen (**CH25** 768masl) across the river is the site of “Stanfield’s Whare” – DOC announced in late 2009 that the hut was to be demolished as it literally was falling into the river due to erosion. The track wanders along roughly parallel with the river and minutes later there is a small meadow then a landslip area to the left can be seen plus this area has some superb “Lord of the Rings” trees with amazing shapes and growths.

The high Point



Somewhere around 5:25 minutes there is tussock grassland with poles clearly marking the route but in matter of minutes it is back into the trees. Then the Cascade Stream has to be crossed ensuring wet feet, assuming no previous mishaps occurred, as the water is calf to knee depth depending on the state of the weather. Have a good practice paddle as this has to be repeated first thing next morning on the way out. In about a total time of 5:40 minutes after a short ascent from the stream line you are at Cascade Hut (**CH28** 779masl).

Stanfield’s Whare



For the super-fit, faster trumper this can be made into a circular walk by entering on the Te Iringa track (S to SSW) from Clements Mill Road via the old Te Iringa Hut site and dropping down (S to SSE) to the marked bridge below the Ohaoko Saddle. On crossing the Kaipo River on the bridge turn to the west on the track which parallels the Kaipo River to eventually pass the Kaipo Saddle before dropping down to cross the Cascade Stream and reach the Cascade Hut. Exit is then the reverse of what is described in the above notes. This tramp comprises two very hard days and involves camping overnight somewhere on the trail between the bridge and the Kaipo Saddle; for many it would involve a second night in the Cascade Hut as progress is very slow in places.

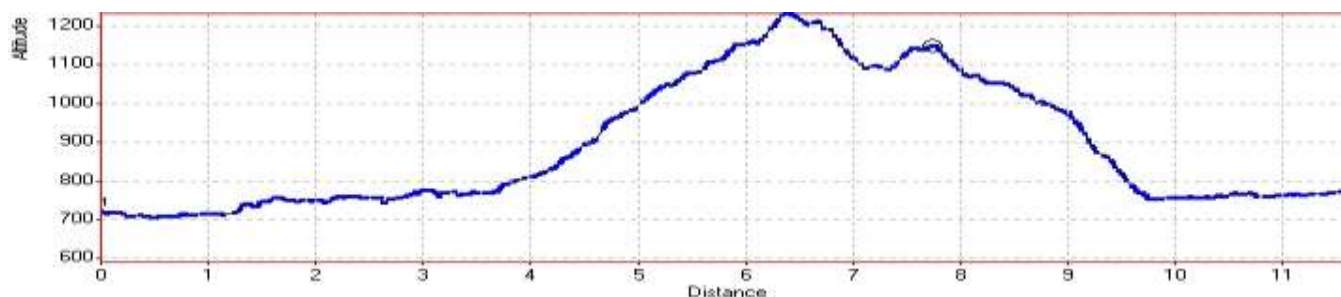
Lord of the Rings tree



On the way in the ascent involves:

- 100metres in the first 4km
- 420m between kilometre 4 – 6.3 to reach the highest point
- 50+m between kilometre 7–7.8

That is about 570 – 600 metres over about 7 kilometres



On the way out the ascent involves:

- 400 metres within a 2km distance , then
- 120 metres over a distance of 1km to reach the highest point

That is 520 metres over a distance of 3 kilometres

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| Notes: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS Garmin GPSmap 62sc • WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit • masl = metres above sea level |
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