

DALY'S CLEARING via TUI MINE and WAITAWHETA HUT

Topo50 Map: BC35 Paeroa

GPS: NZTM and WGS 84

How to get to START: Starting point is Te Aroha which is about 2 hours drive north-east of Taupo. The access route is virtually all on main roads using SH1 up through Putaruru then due north on SH27 from Tirau. Pass through Matamata and Waharoa on SH27 then turn off right after crossing the twin railway tracks on to Wardville Road and then pick up the well signposted road for Te Aroha. In Te Aroha follow the main road northwards through the town and turn off right to Tui Road just before the 100kph sign. Park just before the gate on Tui Road where the Golf Link Track crosses.

Rough description: A circular 3-day tramp of around 37km with about 1500 metres of ascent and descent with most of the hard work on days 1 and 3 whilst day 2 is a pleasant stroll down the old tramway in the Waitawheta valley visiting all the artifacts of the previous logging industry plus a side trip to admire some Kauri trees.

Day 1 seems endless at 6 – 7 hours in past the Tui Mine, skirting Te Aroha mountain and following the new meandering track replacing the old N-S route to get to the Waitawheta Hut. Day 2 is a delightful wander following the old tramway in the Waitawheta Valley and over a few very large new suspension bridges. Day 3 is a bit harder again at 6-7 hours following the Mangakino Pack track. This is a route and not a track back up to the Tui Saddle and back to Te Aroha passing through the earth-works being put in place as protection from possible landslip.



Tramp line shown in red just north of Te Aroha

Day 1: From the car park (WP01 236masl) cross Tui Road and enter the forest at the track signs passing up behind the house that is seen from the road. Go through quite a deep cutting, past some signs detailing the old reservoir then the reservoir itself before turning left uphill (WP02 252masl) on the Tui Link track. After about 30 minutes have a look to the right at a junction (WP03 377masl) to view a small waterfall before following the track uphill to the left. Ten minutes later cross the gravel road (WP04 413masl) to re-enter the superb native forest on a path that heads uphill then leftish passing an old hut (pump house) before continuing on more or less following the contour then uphill again.

The next feature is a view over the very eroded stream line below the Tui Mine from the edge of the road (WP05 496masl) before winding up through the totally devastated area with mining artifacts and spoil heaps. Within one hour the topmost spoil heap (WP06 556masl) is reached from where there are good views downstream and over Te Aroha.

Tui Mine devastation



New N-S track section



From here on keep the eyes open for the large, black plastic pipe that roughly parallels the track – this is reportedly to carry a calcareous slurry from near the top of Tui Saddle for injection into the mine workings to help neutralise the acidity and cut down pollution of the Tunakohia Stream which runs through Te Aroha. Five minutes after the mine bear left at a small Y-fork (WP07 605masl) and begin a log grunt up a stony, slippery track. The Tui Saddle is reached within 1:30 minutes and the junction with the Mangakino Pack track (WP09 706masl) is passed just before a fenced-off, deep hole or mine shaft is found on the left. The track is now undulating to rolling as it passes down a ridge then at 1:50 minutes an orange track marker (WP10 774masl) leads on to a smaller track which soon rejoins the wider track. Within 2 hours the track approaches the road leading to the communications mast where a T-junction is found (WP11 763masl) – turn left here to follow the superb wide track signposted Waitawheta and Waiorongomai – this good track, Plutus Claim track, soon degrades and the going gets harder. In 2:40 minutes a T-junction (WP12 703masl) is reached where left heads for the Mangakino Pack track so go right.

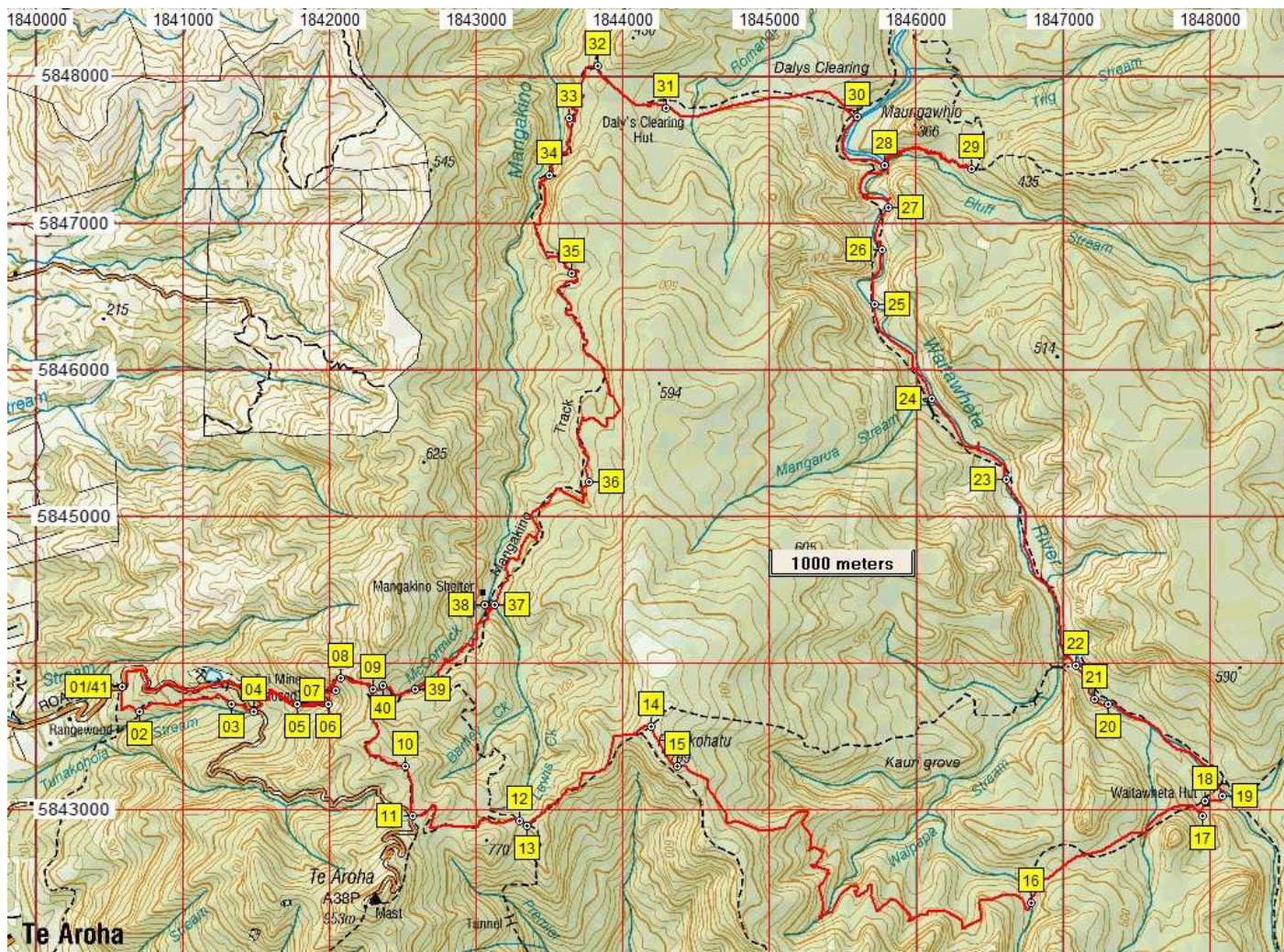
Ten minutes later fork left to the Crimson Thread track (WP13 702mqs) which passes through quite steep country for the next 40 minutes until a crest is reached with a T-junction (WP14 793masl) where the old N-S track to the left is shown as closed so follow the new track heading to the right – this is inclined to be rather raw and muddy. At the next Y-fork (WP15 781masl) go leftish or straight on – the descent that follows is a bit tricky as the track is still new and immature. The wandering and meandering ascents and descents now seem to go on endlessly through the featureless forest but after 6 hours there is a second crossing of the Waipapa Stream (WP16 460masl) and 40 minutes after this there is a track sign (WP17 383masl) at a junction indicating the Loggers loop and the Waitawheta hut which is reached 5 minutes later in a total time of around 6:45 minutes (WP18 382masl).

This is a huge new hut with 2 bunk rooms with something like 30 beds, huge kitchen / social area, wood burner, internal and external sinks plus a self composting toilet.

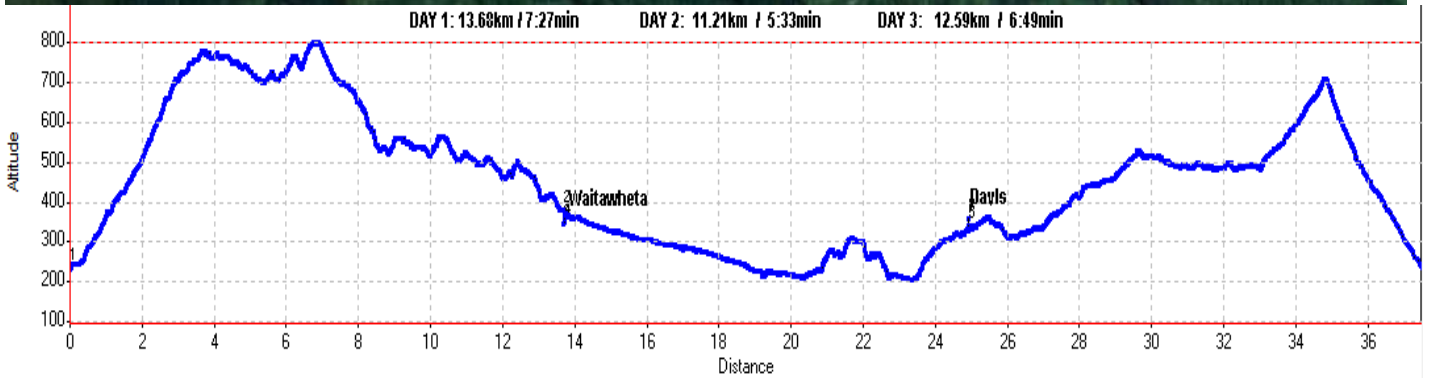
Goat hunters at Waitawheta hut



There are many artifacts from the wood mill that was on this site so an hour or two can be spent browsing around looking at things like the old boiler site and turn-table for the wagons of the tramline.



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01/41	1840587	5843836	236	Park at top of Tui Road where tracks cross and gate on road Start / End
02	1840703	5843673	252	11min (339m); On track opposite car park then left uphill at T-junction on Tui Link
03	1841325	5843716	377	33min (1.01km); Y-fork, right to see waterfall then main track up left
04	1841475	5843673	413	42min (1.34km); Cross gravel road to path, super forest then up past old pump-house on contour path
05	1841776	5843720	496	57min (1.94km); View mine working and eroded valley off right then up through devastated area
06	1841985	5843718	556	1:06min (2.19km); On top of old mine spoil heap with views over Te Aroha
07	1842038	5843811	605	1:17min (2.44km); Left at small Y-fork
08	1842080	5843898	660	1:25min (2.63km); Spot time-check on long uphill grind on tricky, slippery stony path
09	1842292	5843820	706	1:41min (3.01km); T-junct on Tui Saddle where Mangakino Pack trail joins from E then pass fenced hole
10	1842515	5843290	774	2:02min (3.80km); Slip right off wide undulating / rolling track on ridge to smaller track
11	1842565	5842956	763	2:14min (4.16km); Go left away from road on super wide track for Waitawheta and Waiorongomai
12	1843298	5842920	703	2:57min (5.34km); Off Plutus Claim, right for Waitawheta & N-S tracks. Left for Mangakino Pack track
13	1843339	5842895	702	2:59min (5.40km); Y-fork, left to Crimson Thread track. Right is pack track
14	1844189	5843561	793	3:39min (6.67km); Minor crest T-junct. Old N-S route to left closed - go right on new, boggy track
15	1844371	5843295	781	3:52min (7.02km); Y-fork right for N-S track. Left/straight and down on steep, raw tricky new track
16	1846784	5842365	460	6:12min (12.01km); Second crossing of Waipapa Stream after endless meandering ascents and descents
17	1847954	5842959	383	6:52min (13.56); T-junction with Loggers Loop track and to Waitawheta Hut track
18	1847970	5843056	382	7:27min (13.68km); Waitawheta Hut. Big, new, huge kitchen, 2 dorms, wood-burner: 30+beds
19	1848089	5843090	361	DAY2. 6min (182m) ; Bridge on canyon then left to Waitawheta Tram, many artifacts and info boards
20	1847314	5843716	328	32min (1.35km); Slip left off wide shelf of tramway to bridge and narrow track
21	1847216	5843753	324	40min (1.54km); Huge old log of tramway bridge then back on tramway route
22	1847083	5843981	315	47min (1.86km); Site of the old Waitwheta Hut with toilet, then river crossing (no bridge)
23	1846609	5845251	284	1:18min (3.28km); Linked river crossing as slightly deeper
24	1846101	5845806	266	1:47min (4.28km); North side of new bridge, small Y-fork with dead end off left
25	1845714	5846441	236	2:18min (5.15km); New huge suspension bridge and minutes later second similar bridge + goats
26	1845763	5846824	216	2:30min (5.53km); Wide river crossing with 4 old piers. Y-fork for pylon site then old truck + tree
27	1845808	5847110	220	2:51min (5.59km); Third huge suspension bridge with massive bluff on N side
28	1845788	5847393	212	3:07min (6.65km); Junction for Ananui Falls (3:30min) off right - also for Kauri Trees (30min)
29	1846373	5847370	311	3:50min (7.99km); Second of giant 600 year old Kauri after tricky ascent on narrow track
30	1845593	5847724	205	4:57min (9.75km); T-junct with straight Franklin Rd and left up "trampers-tram" of wire covered steps
31	1844291	5847786	331	5:33min (11.21km); Daly's Clearing hut. No heating, 2 bunk rooms, 16 beds, inside kitchen and sink
32	1843828	5848070	350	DAY 3. 25min (696m); T-junction, go left on Mangakino Pack Track with Te Aroha mountain at 5hrs
33	1843628	5847720	314	38min (1.26km); In narrow valley then round snout of ridge with Kauri trees
34	1843496	5847327	335	1:07min (1.99km); Wooden bridge over small ravine
35	1843649	5846659	415	1:40min (3.03km); Stream line clogged with collapsing red clay from landslide
36	1843771	5845236	498	3:19min (5.71km); Rocky side stream crossing whilst descending, endless side streams
37	1843122	5844400	483	4:16min (7.36km); River confluence after endless side stream crossings whilst descending
38	1843062	5844402	491	4:29min (7.59km); Mangakino shelter for lunch
39	1842577	5843826	617	5:27min (9.27km); Y-fork with Waiorongomai saddle at 1:30 to left and Tui Saddle 30min straight
40	1842359	5843847	689	5:40min (9.73km); Mine sign then mine tunnel on LHS. 1:09MIN & 2.86k to go for 12.59Km in 6:49min



Day 2: This can be made a hard day by going via the Ananui Falls or a delightful "touristy" day by wandering down the tramline in the Waitawheta Valley – the second option is described below.

From the hut head downhill and cross the canyon on the wooden bridge and turn left on to the tramline where the sleepers are still to be found in places on this gently sloping wide shelf of a track with many artifacts and information boards. In 30 minutes slip left off the tramway (**WP20** 328masl) to cross a bridge to follow a narrow track for a few metres then rejoin the tramway near a huge log which was part of a bridge (**WP21** 324masl) and five minutes later come to the toilet on the site of the old Waitawheta hut which is where the previously mentioned old N-S route emerged. A couple of river crossings (**WPs22 & 23**) are now required but they are not difficult in low flow times. Between 2 and 3 hours there is a series of three large new suspension bridges and another river crossing (**WP26** 216masl). After the river crossing there is a possible diversion to the right to the pylon site then there is the artifact of the day – the old tram bogey with a log on top.

Old log on Waitawheta tramway



Linked river crossing



The third suspension bridge (**WP27** 220masl) is crossed in about 2:50 minutes, this is easily recognised as there is a massive, dark coloured bluff on the north side of the bridge. Fifteen minutes later the junction (**WP28** 212masl) to the Ananui Falls is reached. It is well worthwhile taking a diversion here over the river and up the rather steep, slippery tricky slope to go and have lunch at the giant 600 year-old Kauri trees (**WP29** 311masl). After visiting the Kauri trees retrace the route back to the tramline and head north again till, at around 5 hours, meet a T-junction (**WP30** 205masl) signposted Franklin Road straight ahead and Daly's Clearing hut to the left. It is about 30 minutes from here to the hut but there is some ascending to be done and this is on what can best be called a "trampers-tramline" constructed from half-rounds of timber covered in chicken wire. Daly's Clearing hut (**WP31** 331masl) is great as it is quite small, no heating but does have 2 dorms and an inside sink and water supply with a composting toilet as seems the norm nowadays.

Daly's Clearing hut can get busy as it is so accessible from Franklin Road and it is a popular place for youth group activities. One of these activities is obviously building shelters and a great number of Punga have been destroyed in the course of their efforts. An hour or so was spent tidying up some of the garbage around this hut!

Kauri lunch stop



Day 3: From the hut head slightly uphill through the badly damaged Punga area which appears almost tropical in nature. A junction (**WP32** 350masl) is reached in about 15 minutes NW of Daly's Clearing hut and go left to the Mangakino Pack track with Te Aroha mountain signposted as being 5 hours away. As the section is a route and not a track treat this 5 hours with caution – if the route is badly infected with windfalls and slips an extra hour or so could be required. There are very few features of note on this "track" and a fair effort is required to keep going and just get there! A fair amount of altitude is gained but this is done in a very gentle manner and no real grunts are necessary.

At about 40 minutes there is a bit of a narrow valley then the "snout" of a ridge is rounded and several Kauri trees can be seen (**WP33** 314masl). There are numerous side valleys and valley heads to cross and all bar one are un-bridged – there is a wooden bridge after about 1 hour (**WP34** 335masl). Many of these side streams take a fair effort to cross and there is a beauty at 1:35 minutes or so (**WP35** 415masl) where the stream line is pretty well clogged with wet, unstable red clay from a landslip.

There is then rather a rocky crossing in about 3:10 minutes (**WP36** 498masl). On the descent to the McCormick Creek there seem to be endless side streams to cross to get down to the main stream but the confluence is easily recognised (**WP37** 483masl) when it is reached in something over 4 hours. From the confluence it is only a matter of 5 minutes to reach the Mangakino Shelter (**WP38** 491masl) which makes a good lunch spot. This shelter must be one of the sturdiest to be found and it can only be imagined just how the poles and timber were brought in.

The Tui Saddle is sign-posted as being only an hour away and study of the map shows that the ascent does become steeper but the track is much better and good progress can now be made. At about 5:15minutes there is a Y-fork (**WP39** 617masl) with the Waiorongomai Saddle noted at 1:30 minutes to the left and the Tui Saddle at 30 minutes straight on.

At about 5:30 minutes the foliage clears a bit allowing a bit of a view of the forest traversed during the past few hours then there is a sign-board (**WP40** 689masl) on the edge of the track warning of the mine-workings ahead. Almost immediately after this there is a mine shaft or tunnel on the left and minutes later the Tui Saddle is reached (**WP09** 706masl).

Turn to the right at this point and retrace the Day 1 route back through the Tui Mine and this final section should take only about one hour. As a variation, once on the road below **WP05** stay on the road down through the area of the old mill where there are now massive earthworks happening. The present activity is building a massive bund to protect Te Aroha in case there is a land slip up nearer the Tui Mine – the bund should then intercept the debris plus the (polluted) water that could / would be pouring down the slopes and threatening the town. The road eventually arrives back at the gate where the transport was parked on Day 1 at **WP01**. The trip out on the day in question took all of 6:45 minutes, was a fair effort but proved to be really good fun since there really was some adventure following the route and over-coming all the obstacles including tricky stream line crossings and windfalls.

Route not track

