

Kaweka J and Flats

Topo50 Map: BJ37 Kuripapango

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo on **SH5** for Napier.
- 114km turn right to Glengarry Road
- 129km turn right to Puketitiri Road (Heritage Trail)
- 157km Lodge entrance on the LHS with locked gate
- 167km left to Whittle Road
- 171km enter Kaweka Forest Park
- 179km car park area with toilet

Rough description:

A long drive to the start but possible in about 2:30minutes with a few things to bear in mind:

- Way out on Puketitiri Road in Hawkes Bay it is remote and there is no filling station on the roads used (use diesel motor / carry extra)
- Whittle Road onwards is on gravel road, is very steep in places with fair drop offs – use 4 wheel drive if available / no nervous drivers

NB Times and distances are measured from Taupo Police station on the Domain. The tramp routes can be seen in blue / red near BJ37 logo.

The William Hartree Lodge is very comfortable, well kitted out and can sleep a round dozen with ample camping area around it. This makes a good overnight base leaving ample time to drive home on the second day.

Two tramps are presented here and either can be done on the day of arrival – it all depends on the weather as without visibility and views it is not even worth considering going up Kaweka J.

Kaweka J: If it is not steeply uphill or downhill then it is about to be or just has been and the going can be pretty tricky and slightly challenging with loose gravel, gravel covered steep slopes, red clays which look slippery but do offer fairly good traction. The first track sign is well visible from the top right hand side of the car park (**WP00974masl**) and despite what the sign shows the route via the Makahu Spur goes to the right towards the Makahu Saddle Hut which is only a couple of hundred metres away. Pass the bright orange hut and the track soon starts zig zagging up through quite rough terrain with the track well degraded and incised into the reddish clay at times. The zig zags end within 2km (**WP031241masl**) and the very obvious narrow ridges to be ascended start to show themselves with rocky pimples or outcrops on them. The going remains steep but tackled at a sensible pace it is all very manageable and it does ease after 90 minutes when there is a very indistinct sign (**WP041472masl**) indicating the Dominie Hut or Bivvy (**WP051465masl**) off right.

Degraded track



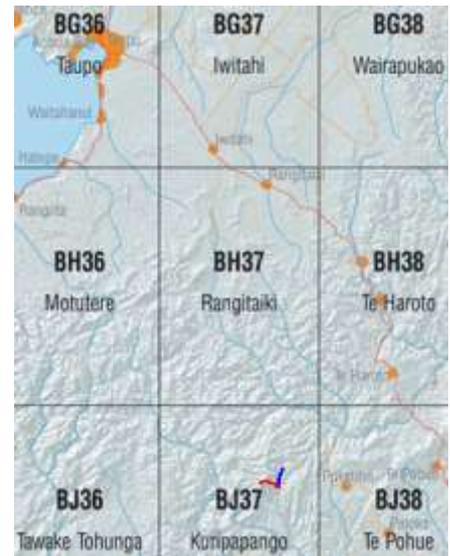
Very degraded section of steep track



On leaving the hut the going is still steep and rough as series of rocky pinnacles with a lot of shattered rock are passed as the ridge is ascended to eventually reach a more or less level tussock area with a triangular sign (**WP061695masl**) marking an indistinct junction. About 400metres to the left over a plateau area a large cairn can be seen, the cairn is a memorial to people lost in the 1939-45 period. Just beyond the cairn the remains of the old Trig can be found (**WP071720masl**).



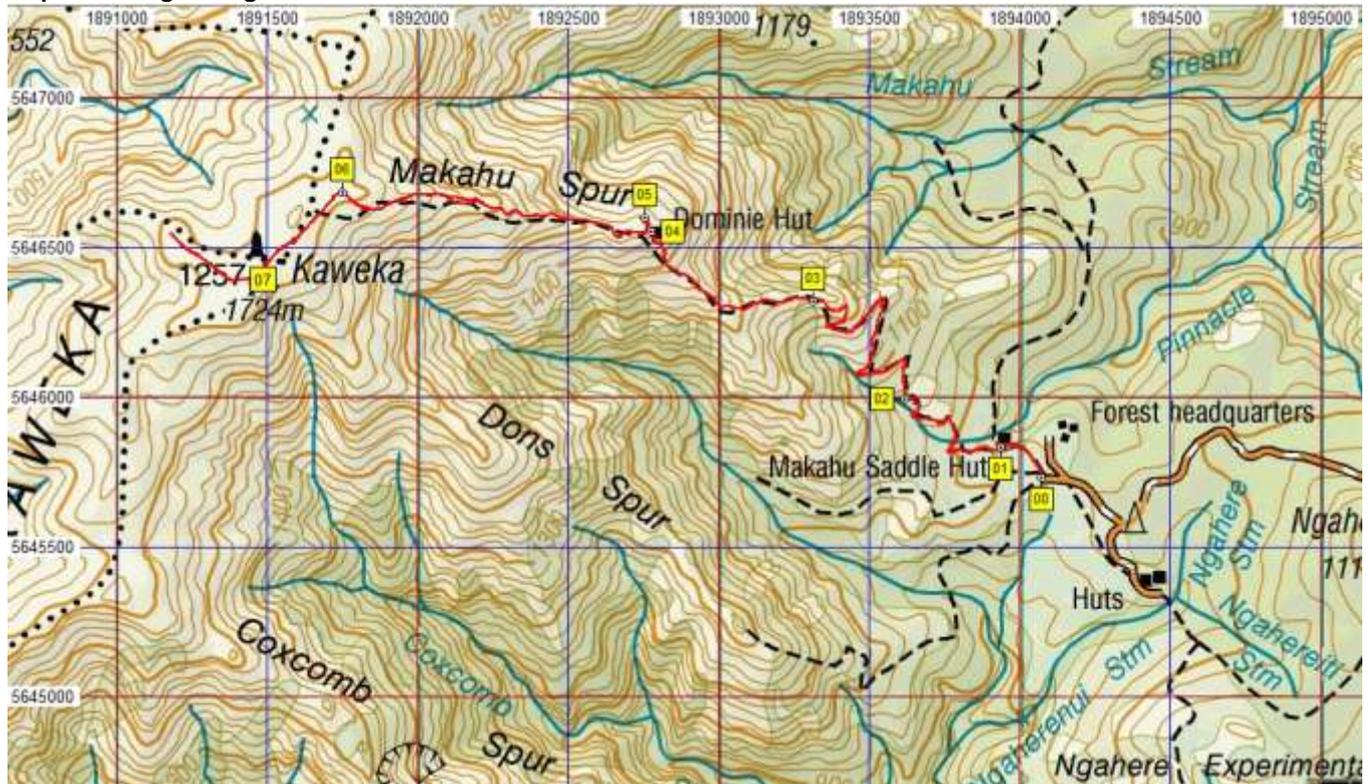
There are small signs all around indicating that a lot of tracks and huts can be reached from here, these tracks / routes are marked by poles. By backtracking to the NNE the way down can be used immediately unless the North Kaweka top is on the menu which only adds about another kilometre to the outing.



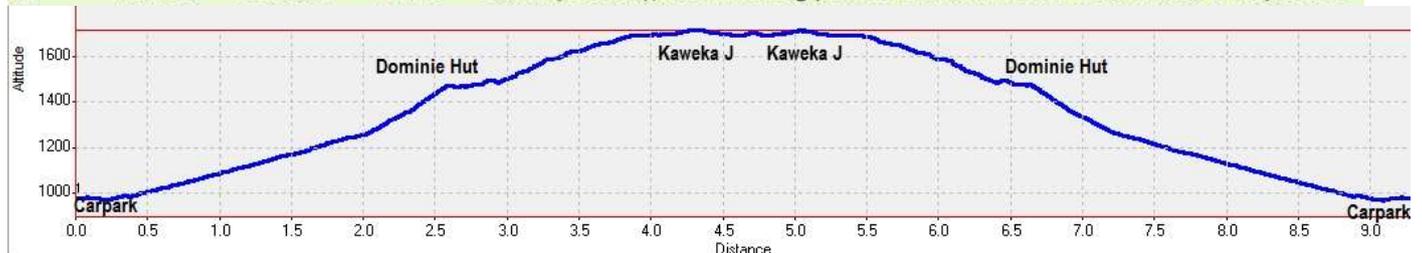
First track sign



Map and Google Image with GPS data - Kaweka J



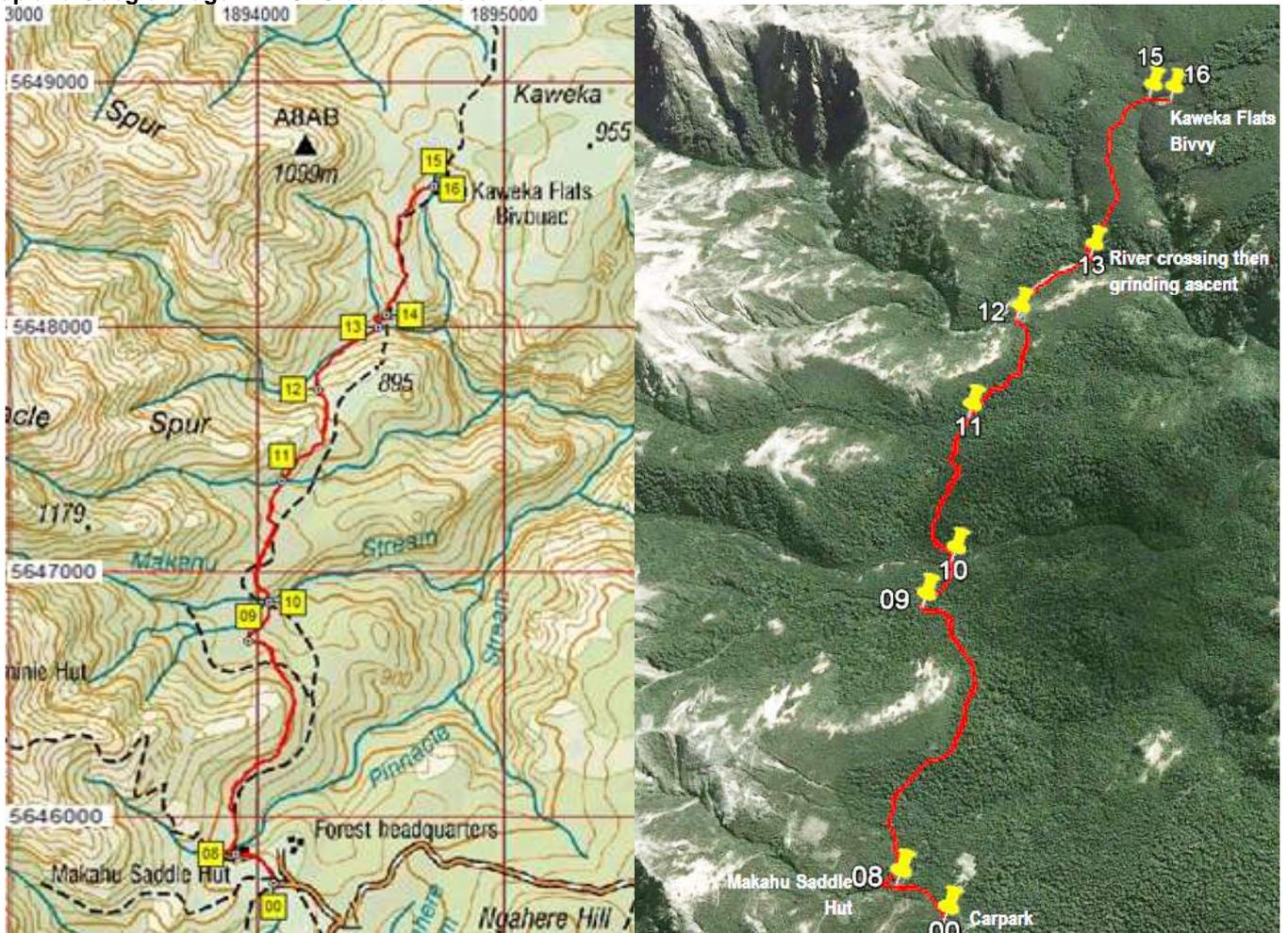
N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
00	1894070	5645731	974	Car park for Kaweka J
01	1893938	5645835	970	200m (5min); Junction to Mahaku Saddle Hut
02	1893617	5645995	1050	800m (24min); Bend after slippery red clay eroded track
03	1893315	5646321	1241	1.9km (53min); Below small rocky pimple on narrow ridge
04	1892777	5646555	1472	2.6km (1:28min); +/- level with sign for right turn to Dominion Hut
05	1892756	5646602	1465	2.65km (1:32min); Bright orange Dominion Hut with 2 bunks and toilet with window
06	1891752	5646685	1695	3.9km (2:49min); Tussock area with triangular notice and left turn for cairn
07	1891487	5646391	1720	4.3km (3 hours); Site of old trig point on Kaweka J after more or less level plateau



Kaweka Flats Biv: This is a good walk if the weather prevents an ascent of Kaweka J as the track is well sheltered in mature beech forest though there are several stream line crossings, one river crossing and several parts of the track are much degraded. From the carpark (WP00^{974masl}) it is about 5mins to the junction for the Makahu Saddle and the hut (WP08^{968masl}) is only several metres from there. Pass the hut to pick up the track again and immediately there is a slightly tricky steep sided stream to cross and this process continues with good track then stream line crossing, the third of these is reached in less than 45 minutes then a slightly bigger rocky one is crossed minutes later followed by a fairly steep short ascent. At just over an hour there is yet another very rocky one to cross (WP11^{916masl}) and from about here it is very noticeable that the vegetation, now dominated by Manuka / Kanuka, is covered in black fungus – this usually indicates that at the right / wrong time of year there could be wasps present as they feed on such fungus. The track now starts to head downhill to the river and is a bit messy and degraded in parts with small boggy sections then there is a minor landslip area to cross (WP12^{871masl}).

The river is fairly wide and by the debris could be very challenging in wet weather though most of the time it is more of a rock-hopping challenge than water crossing. On reaching the river do not cross but work down-stream keeping to the true right bank, there are a few markers plus some bush bashing parallel to the river involved. Soon a large orange triangular marker (WP13^{811masl}) indicates where the crossing is and on crossing the track parallels a small side stream before leading on to quite a tricky, slippery, gravelly, rocky very steep slope to ascend (WP14^{851masl}) – care must be taken. Once up the track is delightful being pretty well level in good beech forest but there is a sting in the tail with a deeply incised gully (WP15^{889masl}) to cross and by this time the bright orange hut (WP16^{900masl}) can be seen sitting in the middle of the open grassy Kaweka Flats clearing.

Map and Google Image with GPS data - Kaweka Flats



N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
08	1893921	5645846	968	220m (8mins); Mahaku Saddle Hut
09	1893967	5646719	936	1.5km (43min); Third stream line after Mahaku Saddle Hut
10	1894054	5646876	916	1.7km (47min); Larger rocky stream line then steeply upwards to north
11	1894100	5647369	928	2.26km (1:05min); Yet another very rocky stream line
12	1894248	5647742	871	2.75 (1:21min); Small landslip area on messy track heading down to river
13	1894495	5647995	811	3.1km (1:34min); River cross after bush bash, large orange marker then follow side stream upslope
14	1894530	5648049	851	3.25km (1:47min); Very steep, very degraded slope with gravel covering and rock outcrops
15	1894719	5648579	889	3.9km (2:03min); Steep sided gully then due east to open flats area
16	1894796	5648564	900	4km (2:10min); Kaweka Flats Bivvy, easily seen as bright orange

