

LAHAR GULLY

Topo50 Map: BJ35 Waiouru

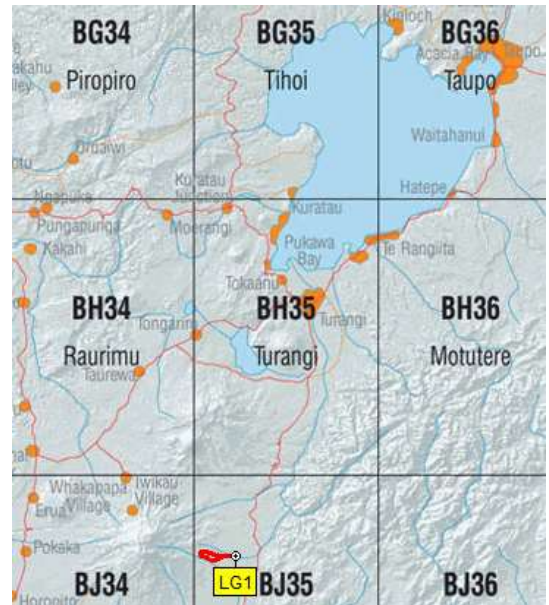
GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: The route follows SH1 down the Lake, through Turangi and along the Desert Highway. Exit the Desert Highway by turning right on to the **Tukino Mountain Road** – taking note of the signs at the start about 2 wheel drive vehicles and not attempting to drive off-road. Follow the gravel road again taking note of the notices about the area being an army training ground. Variants of the road weave around a little bit but follow the poles and note that there are now some rougher sections where the previous wintertime “puddles” have been filled with fresh stones and gravel. Park at the side of the road (Waypoint **01**) 3 kilometres from SH1.

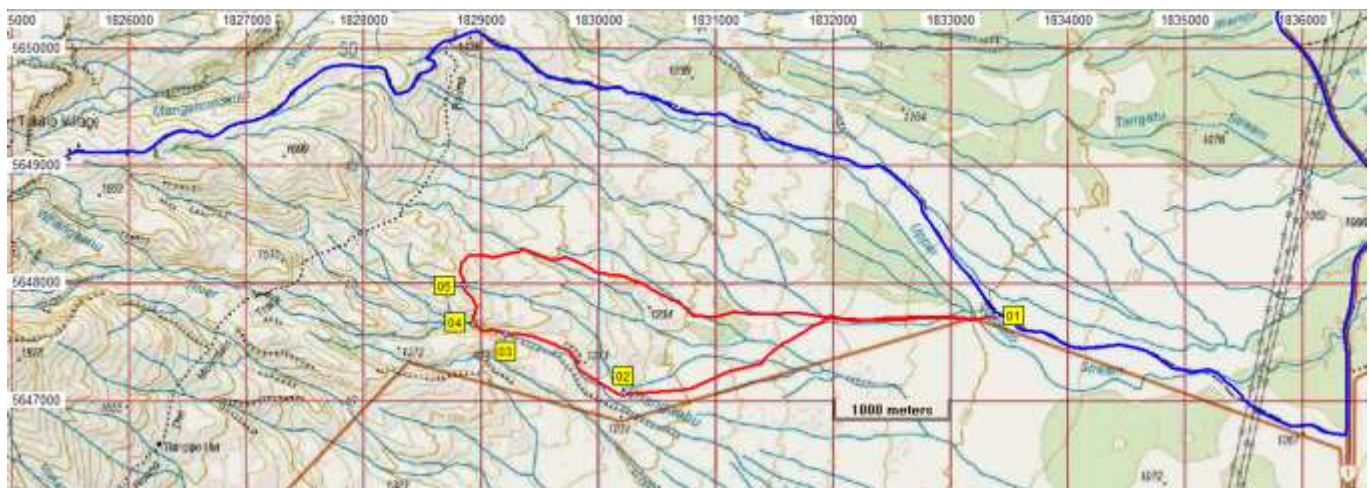
Rough description: This is an easy walk of 3 - 4 hours that can be tackled when conditions dictate that walking at altitude or in exposed places should be avoided. There is no path to follow but the poles marking the edge of the army area are a very good guide. The walking is on soft “Lahar” material with very few rough areas to traverse, unless excitement is being sought.

The walk comprises a simple loop over to, into and up the valley of the Whangaehu River where the man-made bund can be seen which is part of the interventions constructed to try and keep any Lahar flow from the mountain within this river valley. If time and conditions allow the “round-the-mountain” track can be reached along with the Rangipo Hut. (Refer Tukino Road to Rangipo Hut).

Tukino access Road



Distances are taken from the Police Station in Taupo and the route is shown as the red line.



Start of the tramp on the Lahar Plain

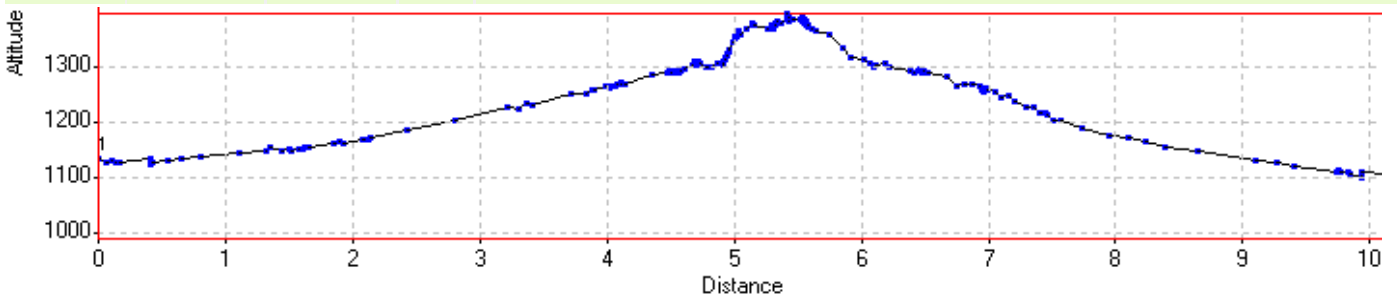
View from the bund



Detail: From the side of the access road (**01** 1134masl) 3.32km from SH1 look for the line of poles marking the edge of the army area and walk parallel and to the right of them (westwards then south-westwards). The featureless nature of the area can be seen in the photograph above which was taken on the way out from the tramp. The line of poles always seems to be coming round in a clockwise direction in front of you but before any of the poles is reached there is a short ascent and the wall of the constructed bund (**02** 1233masl) is surmounted.



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1833384	5647717	1134	Side of Tukino access road 3.28km from Desert Highway
02	1830216	5647049	1233	1:05min (3.37km); Lower end of Lahar bund on Whangaehu River
03	1829215	5647568	1295	1:45min (4.61km); Entering narrow, gorge area on Whangaehu River
04	1828938	5647658	1308	2hours (4.91km); Bottom of scree slope up to the right, moderate ascent
05	1828850	5647969	1374	2:15min (5.32km); Sheltered valley headfor lunch then 4.8km loop N and E back



From this point the route follows the stream line in a north-westerly direction and the going gets more interesting especially when the narrow gorge (**03** 1295masl) part of the valley is reached – see below. In and around here there are several traverses across very loose, soft volcanics and care must be taken or a rapid descent down to the stream will result.

The rough nature of the walking can be seen on the left. Once this point is reached it is advisable to look for the easiest route up right (north) out of the valley; by continuing up-valley, there is a route but this comprises very steep loose, scree slope slopes (**04** 1308masl) which will tax the less confident.

Once the rough scree slopes were conquered the route was a northwards sweep round a valley head, where lunch can be taken (**05** 1374masl). After this the plan is then to keep to the crests of the spurs which gradually descend in a south-easterly direction back towards the Desert Highway. It is worthwhile when near the lower end of the spurs to keep on the right hand side (south) of the final stream-line which has rocky outcrops and these outcrops are better avoided.

Total walking time is about 3:30 minutes with 20 – 30 minutes extra for lunch etc - and altitude gain is about 250 metres

Upper reaches of the gully



Final route of the most recent Lahar flow



- Notes:**
- Garmin Summit GPS
 - **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
 - **masl** = metres above sea level as recorded by GPS unit