

MAUNGATAUTARI WATERFALL

Topo50 Map: BE34 Kihikihi

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: As this is outside the Taupo area the first step is to go North on SH1 heading for Putaruru then head westwards passing through Arapuni to get to Pukeatua. Turn north on Tari Road to reach the Maungatautari car park (**WP01_{324masl}**).

The drive from Taupo takes about 1:30 minutes as does the return which can be on the same road or via Old Taupo Road to Tokoroa as follows. Firstly follow the signs for Putaruru, turning right to cross the Arapuni Dam, pass through Arapuni then pick up the "Old Taupo Road" and finally turn left onto SH32 which joins SH1 in Tokoroa. The map on the right shows the location in relation to Taupo with the area of the tramp showing as red in the top right corner of sheet BE34.

The Maungatautari Scenic Reserve, a forested volcanic cone, was established to restore the local native ecology. There is a 47km mammalian-pest-proof fence surrounding 3,400 hectares of mature native forest. The restoration process involves eradication of all mammalian pests within the fenced area and the re-introduction of a variety of threatened native species many of which have been extinct in the area for the past century.

Rough description: Distance-wise this is not a long walk but the terrain makes it moderately demanding for most trampers and a fair amount of tramping skill is involved, not to mention navigational skills. On the day this should have taken possibly a bit over 6 hours but in the event, going walkabout, just on 9 hours were required to cover the 13 or 14km with the best part of a thousand metres ascending. This outing can best be envisioned by study of the photographs below.

Many a true word



This seen on the way out

How true



Someone knew what we did not!

Fence and gate



Should we have stayed in the cage?

On leaving the car park (**WP01_{324masl}**) the first site is the pest proof fence and entry gate then it was up the gravel road for 500m to branch off left (**WP02_{359masl}**) on a very narrow, tunnel-like track to climb steeply up through very dense forest – this is in fact a small short-cut to re-join (**WP03_{397masl}**) the gravel track within about 30min total time. The route now is to follow the Old Mountain Track and several small junctions are encountered and these have been allocated waypoints 4, 5 and 6. By this time the going is tough as the "track" grinds its way up a steep ridge to arrive at a clear sign for Phil's Cut (**WP07_{596masl}**) where there is a definite change in course from NE to SE. This turn soon leads to a long, steep descent which more or less ends up as bush bashing until a stream confluence is reached (**WP08_{408masl}**). Some time was spent in and around here till the route was established and it is a route, not really a track, and it follows the middle stream of three – a large triangular sign (**WP10_{422masl}**) with waterfall on it was located but did not offer an obvious route so the stream was continued to be followed. After about 3 hours the waterfall was arrived at, admired and photographed (**WP12_{500masl}**).

Waterfall



The decision was then taken to push on and up to the crest of Pukeatua for lunch so it was back-track down the stream line to the SW following the ribboned basic track to meet and turn right (**WP13_{453masl}**) on a more definite track. This turned into a big grunt with steep slopes and tricky footwork in places and a lunch-stop (**WP14_{618masl}**) was called before the crest was reached. Post lunch the party then set off NNE instead of continuing up the steep slope to the NW as intended – walk-about started.

Thick bush discussions

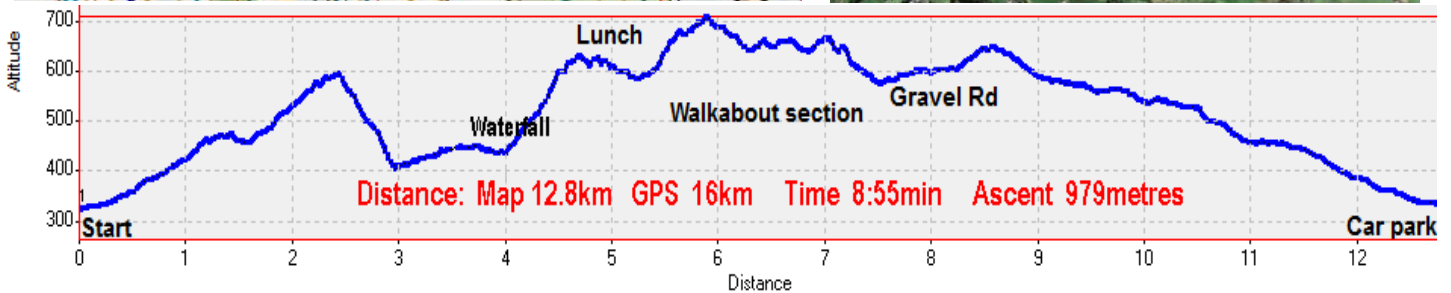
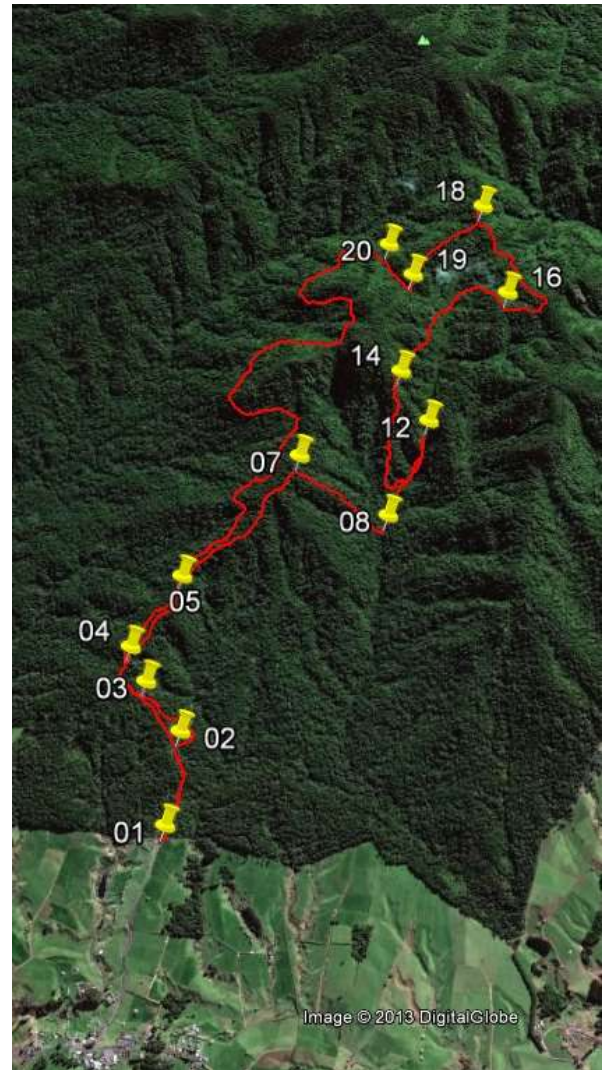
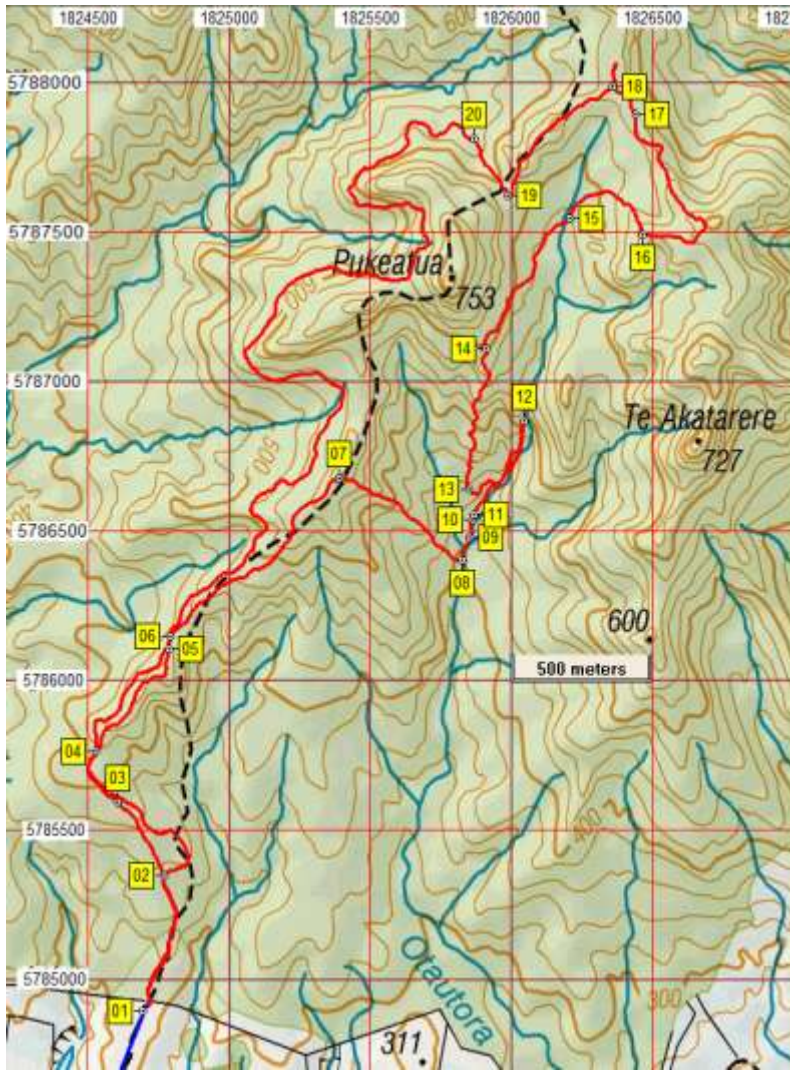


Study of the map shows that 500m or so of steep ascent would have reached the crest and track on Pukeatua whilst the GPS track recorded that a long walk-about wander was taken all the way around the watershed. From the top of Pukeatua it would have been no distance at all to get back to **WP07** and the sign for Phil's Cut. Several other waypoints are shown and these were taken as points to note on the way out and self-recovery. Suffice to say it was a very long hard grind back down the gravel track from **WP20_{575masl}** to the car park as this took almost 1:20min to cover the five odd kilometres.

Study of the GPS and mapped data reveal one or two interesting points; the Trip Computer (GPS) claimed some 16km were walked whilst the mapped route gives 12.8km, then allowing 300m ascent as equivalent to one kilometre the mapped route would then be about 15km since 979m were ascended. It looks like the newest model GPS accounts for altitude gains in walk distance.



The drive from Taupo, using the lower westerly BLUE line takes about 1:30 mins. Upper blue line leads to the N gate



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1824696	5784895	324	Car park at southern entrance to Maungatautari Reserve at end of Tari Road, Pukeatua
02	1824774	5785347	359	500m (11min); Off left on narrow, tunnel track (SCD) after following fence line for some metres
03	1824606	5785594	397	800m (25min); right at ribbons to Road on over Mnt Track uphill going right at minor Y junction
04	1824532	5785764	429	1km (29min); right off road to old Mnt Track and steeply upwards on ridge
05	1824789	5786107	460	1.5km (40min); meet road again and go right
06	1824796	5786150	458	1.6km (42min); right to NE on old track with big grunt up steep sided ridge
07	1825392	5786679	596	2.4km (1:07min); Right at sign to Phil's Cut. High point for smoko then long steep slope down to SE
08	1825827	5786405	408	3km (1:53min); stream confluence after virtually bush bashing
09	1825852	5786478	414	3.1km (2:12min); several checks then follow stream NNE with ribbons
10	1825864	5786538	422	3.2km (2:21min); big triangle with "waterfall" sign, continue to follow stream up-river
11	1825870	5786554	422	3.25km (2:23min); stay in stream line - middle stream of three
12	1826048	5786868	500	3.7km (2:53min); waterfall using small track for last part of the way
13	1825854	5786641	453	4km (3:11min); right on to track after back-track to SW on ribbons, yellow = waterfall
14	1825913	5787110	618	4.6km (4:12min); lunch after grinding climb on rough marked track to NNE
15	1826207	5787544	586	5.3km (5:04min); [walkabout] upslope on true right bank of creek
16	1826467	5787489	683	5.6km (5:47min); [walkabout] hard left at small junction on self recovery aiming for main track
17	1826440	5787893	665	6.4km (6:40min); [walkabout] another small junction, go left
18	1826362	5787986	658	6.6km (6:49min); [walkabout] bigger junction, several coloured signs - go left to SW
19	1825988	5787624	614	7.3km (7:25min); [walkabout] right at junction marked QDF going downstream in the stream
20	1825868	5787812	575	7.5km (7:37min); hit gravel road and go left for 1:18min / 5.3km to get back to carpark

Notes: GPS = Garmin GPSMap 62sc WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit masl = metres above sea level