

PIHANGA

Topo50 Map: BH35 Turangi

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo down the lake on **SH1** to Turangi
- Turn right off **SH1** on to **SH41** towards Tokaanu
- Turn first left off **SH41** to meet and turn left on the “old highway”
- Take first right to the SW through industrial area
- At **WP09** asphalt changes to gravel & road turns left to SSE
- Continue on the good gravel road which ascends to 675m passing through hilly, sheep farm with several gates

Rough description: A short walk (6.5km) which could be considered moderate due to the relentless uphill (666m overall ascent), through fairly dense forest on track which is quite heavily overgrown in places. There are no views whilst in the forest, there is a cable to follow if the track signs are lost and there are a fair number of birds – robin clearly seen and heard. At the top views are very good from Tauhara to Ruapehu and allows a close-up of Lake Rotopounamu. This is all on private land hence permission is required before proceeding. However the farmer is very accommodating apart from during the lambing season as this is a sheep farm.

Detail: Depending on the transport and state of the gravel road it is possible to drive all the way up to the edge of the tree-line which borders the sheep paddocks. The limit is near a building with communications equipment on the top and at **WP01** 675masl. In the top corner of the paddock there is an old power pole behind which is a fence bordering the farm limit into the forest, the first task is to get over the fence without damaging it or yourself.

End of the road (WP01)



Power pole in corner of this paddock



Pink ribbon markers



Once over the fence there is a track to be found and there are various markers; orange, pink and blue are trap line markers – there are a lot of rodent traps - whilst the track markers are white reflective plus pink ribbons. The track is pretty good in most places and there is a bonus that the power cable (**WP02** 769masl) feeding the microwave station on the summit is usually clearly seen whilst on the track. There are some pretty large, old trees to be seen but the undergrowth is quite dense most of the way making any off-track progress a bit slow and scratchy. After a couple of kilometres or 1:15min uphill there is a bit of a change (**WP03** 1067masl) in the vegetation to fewer large trees and generally lower bush cover. Thirty minutes later (**WP04** 1126masl) there is a less steep area with moss covered trees. The tree line (**WP05** 1204) is reached in about 2 hours just after passing a few knobbly, rocky bits on the track and metres into the lower scrubby bush there is a large rock (**WP06** 1214masl) from where there is a god view of the summit and slope ahead as well as of Lake Taupo.

The big rock below the summit



Lake Taupo view



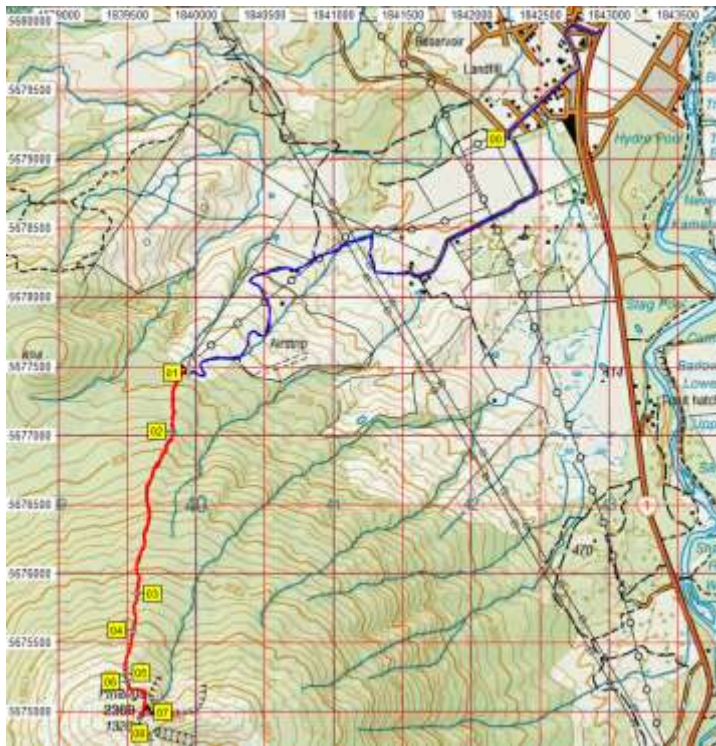
Steam plumes from Te Mari Crater



From a short distance above the rock the route heads east towards the severely eroded face of Pihanga but does not get into the eroded zone but heads steeply upwards to hit the summit just short of the trig (**WP07** 1326masl). Once on the summit a wander around allows the size of the communication masts to be appreciated and the control hut (**WP08** 1323masl) for the system can be walked around. However the warning notices put up by the operator – Genesis – should be read as too long a time should not be spent around here with the inherent dangers associated with micro-waves. The walk back down the hill takes about an hour less than getting up. Study of the lie of the land from the summit plus the map and Google image would allow planning of a route up from Lake Rotopounamu.



Access road is the blue line



Communication masts



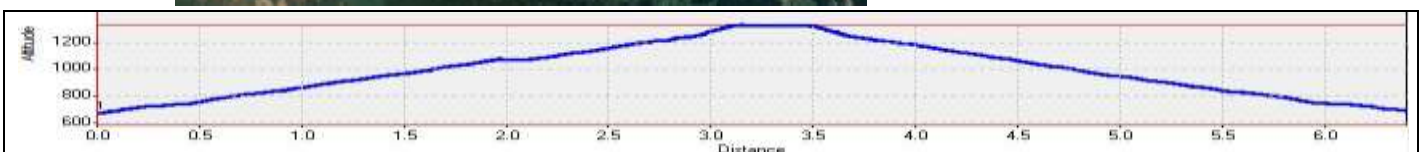
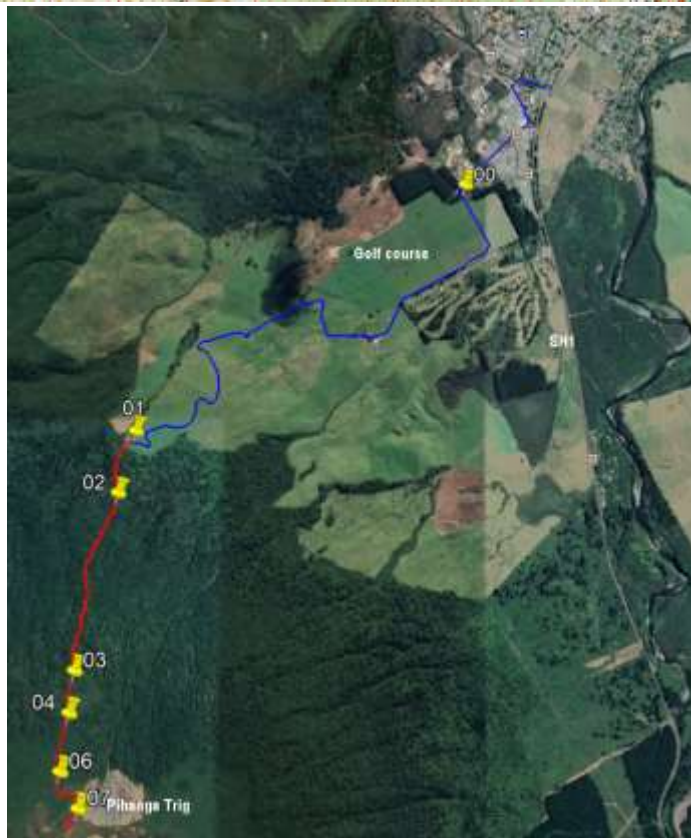
Trig with Lake Taupo behind



Microwave hut



Eroded face of Pihanga



Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
00	1842297	5679147	396	Point where asphalt road changes to gravel. Down the side of golf course
01	1839946	5677455	675	Parking place at the top of gravel road 5.8km from SH1 in Turangi
02	1839832	5677030	769	550m (17min); Cable clearly visible on track, many trap lines
03	1839570	5675857	1067	1.92km (1:11min); Change in bush to lower and fewer trees
04	1839544	5675587	1126	2.38km (1:42min); Less steep area with moss covered trees
05	1839489	5675277	1204	2.71km (2:00hrs); Tree line then lower scrubby, scratchy bush
06	1839500	5675219	1214	2.77km (2:06min); Big rock in the open with view of slopes ahead and Lake Taupo
07	1839642	5674999	1328	3.15km (2:30min); Trig at N end of summit with two masts to the SW
08	1839589	5674959	1323	Genesis control hut for microwave station, good shelter in the lee on windy days but read notices

Notes: • GPS Garmin **GPSmap62sc** **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit **masl** = metres above sea level