

SHINE FALLS

Topo50 Map: BH39 Putorino

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo on Lake Terrace and go left on SH5 to Napier
- In 40 min pass Lochinver Station on the right
- 45 mins pass "Scenic Lookout" on the left
- 54 mins pass Tarawera Tavern
- 1:05 pass Summit Café
- 1:15 mins left to Waitara Road
- 1:25 road becomes gravel and enter logging area
- 1:35 mins pass notice for "Kiwi Reserve"
- 1:45 mins right at T-junction to Pohokura Road
- 1:58 mins "Boundary Stream Scenic Reserve"
- 2 hours park at start of track (WP01)

Total driving time to the start is about 2 hours (125km) from Taupo with the route indicated on the map opposite as the first part of the green (SH5) then the blue line. Much of this route is on a winding, steep, gravel road heavily used by logging traffic. The return route is the green line on the far right of the map via the Napier Road.

Rough description: A long time is spent travelling to the start of this short 9km in 3:30min walk but is in wonderful forest with very informative notice boards and three "weta" houses or hotels are easily seen. As this is overall a downhill tramp it does prove very popular with hill-haters but there is a DoC warning that only experienced trampers should attempt this walk.

WETA hotel



Detail: From the car park (WP01^{731masl}) follow the signed track and immediately go right at the small junction through wonderful forest full of ferns and 10 minutes later again take the right branch (WP02^{708masl}) having a look at the weta house or hotel on passing. The gentle downhill continues on the first rate track till a wooden bridge (WP03^{572masl}) is crossed then there is a small incline to get up. An open photo-point is reached in 30min (WP04^{588masl}) but the dense foliage can obscure views of the top of the falls. There is now a bit of undulating terrain to traverse but nothing steep until the Loop Track is signposted off left (WP5^{594masl}) whilst the route is to the right, steeply downhill to Pohokura Road. Minutes down here there is a sign advising trampers to keep moving due to unstable cliffs.

Do not dally sign



After an hour or so there is a fairly steep descent to cross one of the tributaries of the Boundary Stream (WP06^{483masl}) and ten minutes later there is a minor grunt uphill (WP07^{532masl}) after a second stream crossing – these crossings are easy though the stream lines are a little incised and the rocks can look slippery. At this point the route changes from NE to head down a sun dappled ridge to the SE (WP08^{503masl}). After crossing Boundary Stream again (WP09^{489masl}) the track goes quite steeply uphill then undulates till a small crest (WP10^{458masl}) is reached which does offer views of the Boundary Stream valley.

Tracked tree



From here the DoC warning about experience may apply as there is a very narrow shelf like path (WP11^{486masl}) then a set of steps downhill before a fairly steep track with a reminder that it is a track nailed to a tree. At the bottom of this slope there is a one-railed bridge (WP12^{354masl}) over Boundary Stream and, on crossing, a sign indicating the falls are 5minutes to the right after passing another weta house (WP13^{357masl}) on the right above some pools below a bluff where the stream current is strong.



Green = SH5 Taupo Napier Road
Blue = Waitara and Pohokura Roads
Red = Tramp route

Resident WETA in top floor

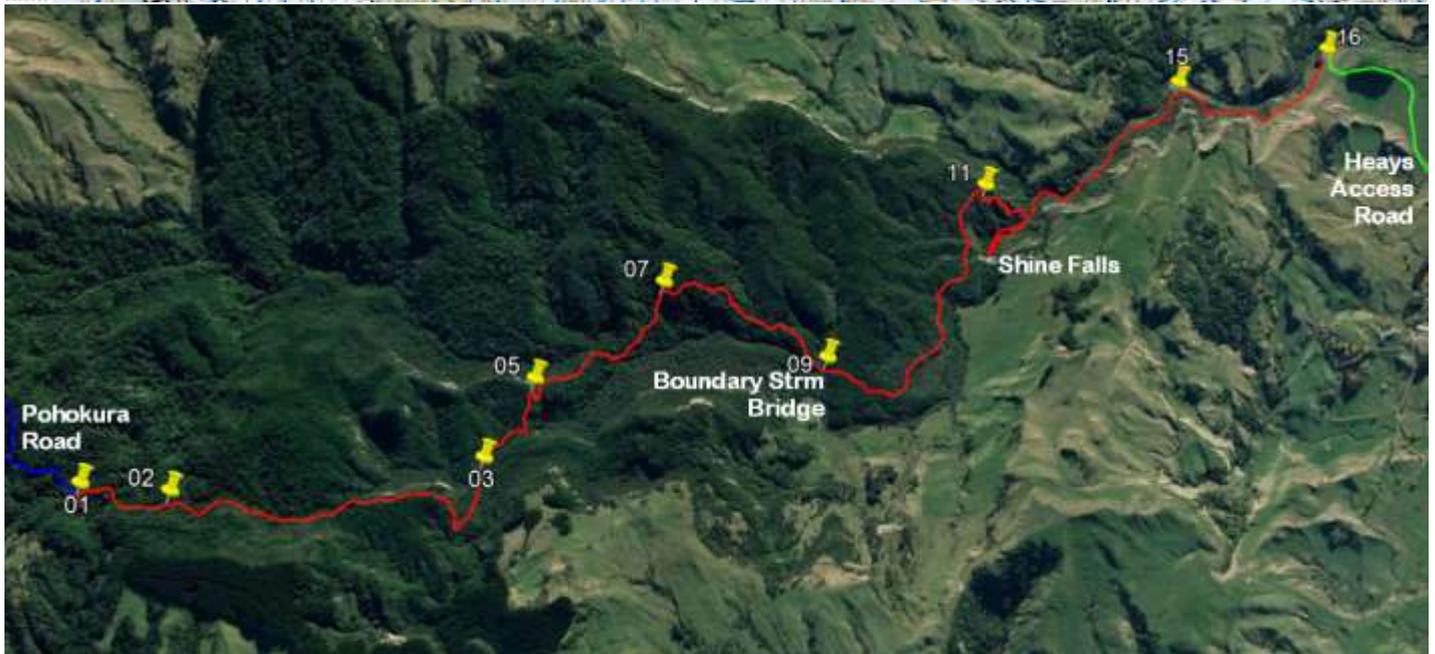
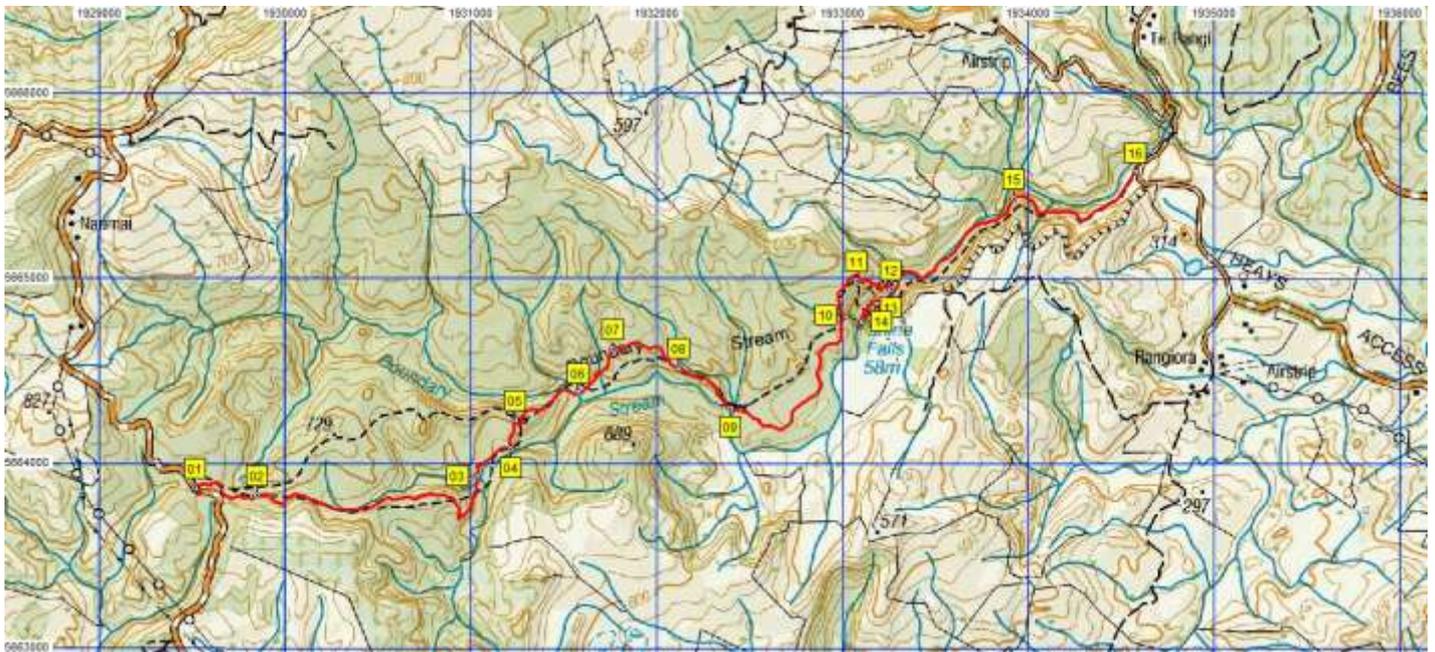


Valley view from WP10

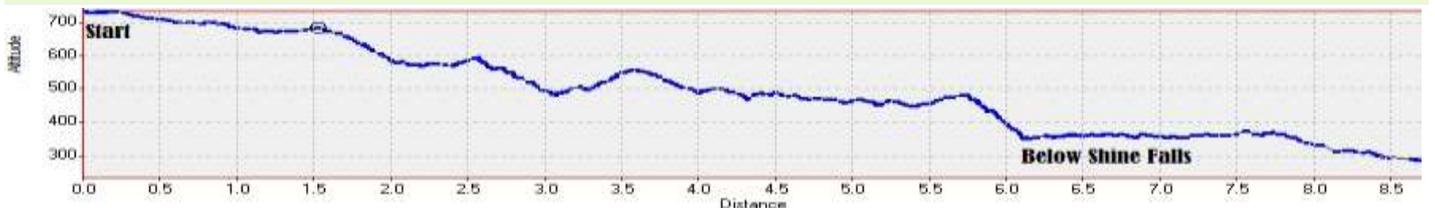


One railed bridge





| Name | Easting | Northing | Alt... | Description |
|------|---------|----------|--------|---|
| 01 | 1929515 | 5663866 | 731 | Car park for Boundary Stream etc, immediately right at junction |
| 02 | 1929850 | 5663825 | 706 | 10min (560m); right at junction in "ferny" forest plus first weta house |
| 03 | 1931032 | 5663927 | 572 | 35min (2.13km); easy walking to cross wood bridge, all gently downhill on very good track |
| 04 | 1931215 | 5664078 | 568 | 30min (2.40km); open, sunny photopoint above the falls, no great views due to foliage |
| 05 | 1931242 | 5664230 | 594 | 45min (2.54km); link to Loop Track, go right steeply down to Pohokura Rd passing unstable cliffs |
| 06 | 1931575 | 5664379 | 483 | 1:12min (3.07km); fairly steep descent to cross streamline of Boundary Stream tributary |
| 07 | 1931760 | 5664616 | 532 | 1:25min (3.46km); bit of an uphill grunt after second stream crossing |
| 08 | 1932116 | 5664514 | 503 | 1:30min (3.95km); heading downslope to the SE on gentle, sun-dappled ridge |
| 09 | 1932396 | 5664294 | 469 | 1:50min (4.32km); bridge over Boundary Stream then steeply uphill |
| 10 | 1933015 | 5664798 | 456 | 2:13min (5.46km); small crest with view of scenic valley just after another stream crossing |
| 11 | 1933073 | 5664985 | 465 | 2:22min (5.81km); narrow shelf track then steps down with waterfall noises & TRACK notice on tree |
| 12 | 1933262 | 5664939 | 354 | 2:35min (6.11km); small one-rail bridge then sign to the right for Shine Falls |
| 13 | 1933154 | 5664839 | 357 | 2:40min (6.31km); second weta hotel on RHS plus river bluffs with pools and fast current |
| 14 | 1933107 | 5664765 | 362 | 2:47min (6.53km); Shine Falls with rainbow in the spray with darting fantails everywhere |
| 15 | 1933921 | 5665433 | 364 | 3:25min (7.8km); more open country with notice-boards plus a third weta hotel |
| 16 | 1934572 | 5665576 | 287 | 3:40min (8.72km); stile from track to car park at end of track |



Shine Falls (**WP14352masl**) are then indeed reached within the stated 5 minutes and they are a real spectacle, especially if the sun is shining giving rainbows and the fantails are active darting about feeding in the spray.

Shine Falls picnic area



Rainbow in the spray



Trampers agog at the view



Shine Falls – what a view



The walk out from the falls is quick, even though the track is undulating to rolling and some of the slopes are a bit tricky due to being gravel covered. Within around 30 minutes the forest has more or less gone and rolling grass slopes dominate when the boundary fence is crossed where there are more notice boards and a third weta house (**WP15364masl**). From here it is 15 minutes on open track through the grasslands with spectacular views of the bluffs and hills of the valley to finally cross the stile (**WP16287masl**) to enter the car-park at the end of the track – total distance just short of 9km in just over three and a half hours.

The view back up-valley



Notes: • **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 60CSx **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit **masl** = metres above sea level