

SILICA RAPIDS via GOLDEN RAPIDS

Topo50 Map: *BJ34-Mnt Ruapehu*

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi then you have the choice:

- Follow the Desert Highway (**SH1**) and turn right on to SH46 for Rangipo.
- Meet **SH47** at a T-junction and turn left then
- Turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for **Whakapapa** and the **Chateau**, or
- In Turangi turn right off SH1 on to SH41 and then turn left off SH41 on to SH47 and proceed as above.

Pass the Chateau on the left and then pass the entrance to Whakapapa Lodge, from where this walk was done. The track is on your right a few metres up the road from Whakapapa Lodge and the car park with the toilet.

Rough description: An easy 2 hour out and back or circular walk on a well formed track through Montane forest (beech / silver birch for the Europeans) to Silica Rapids passing Golden Rapids on the way.

Also pass the junctions to other short walks:

- The Whakapapanui Track, and
- The Whakapapaiti Hut

The out and back walk can be made circular by exiting to the Bruce Road from Silica Rapids – but this does mean some little distance walking on the road with traffic, on a bad day this can be less than pleasant.

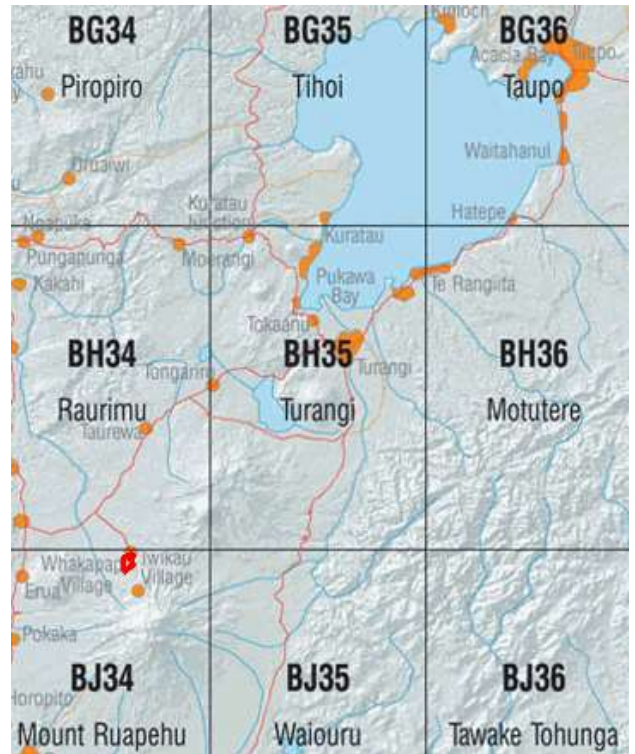
The track can be seen on the extract of the map shown opposite.

There is very little altitude gain or loss on this track with the overall increase from start to target being 140 metres but there are some steeper slopes on the exit to Bruce Road. Time required is 2 to 2:30min covering 7.28km if the circular walk is done.

Detail: From the Bruce Road, as indicated above in the directions to the start, walk down the well-formed and sign-posted track. In 10 minutes you will come to a T-junction (**WP4**) where you go straight ahead – going right takes you on the Whakapapanui Walk. Another 5 minutes brings you to the Golden Rapids (**WP5**). There are descriptive boards explaining all about the rapids. Another feature is the tree as seen in the photograph at the end of this article; this is a natural phenomenon and there are living examples of this species ([Kaikawaka](#)) on this track.

Continue on the good track and in another 5 or 6 minutes you can have a rest on a seat with views of the mountains (**WP6**) then you go down hill for a spell and back into the forest. In a few minutes more you reach a T or Y-junction (**WP8**) and if you want a longer walk try the right branch which goes to the Whakapapaiti Hut – but there are river crossings and wet feet involved.

Another 12 minutes gives a sign indicating the Punaruku Falls (**WP9**) but these are not too visible through the dense vegetation. In a few minutes more the valley opens up (**WP10**), you cross the stream you are following and there is a section of boardwalk. In less than one hour walking you reach a Y-fork (**WP11**) which is signed Bruce Road (if you want to exit that way) and the Silica Rapids which are only minutes straight ahead. The exit to Bruce Road takes 35 – 45 minutes but then have to walk down the main road.

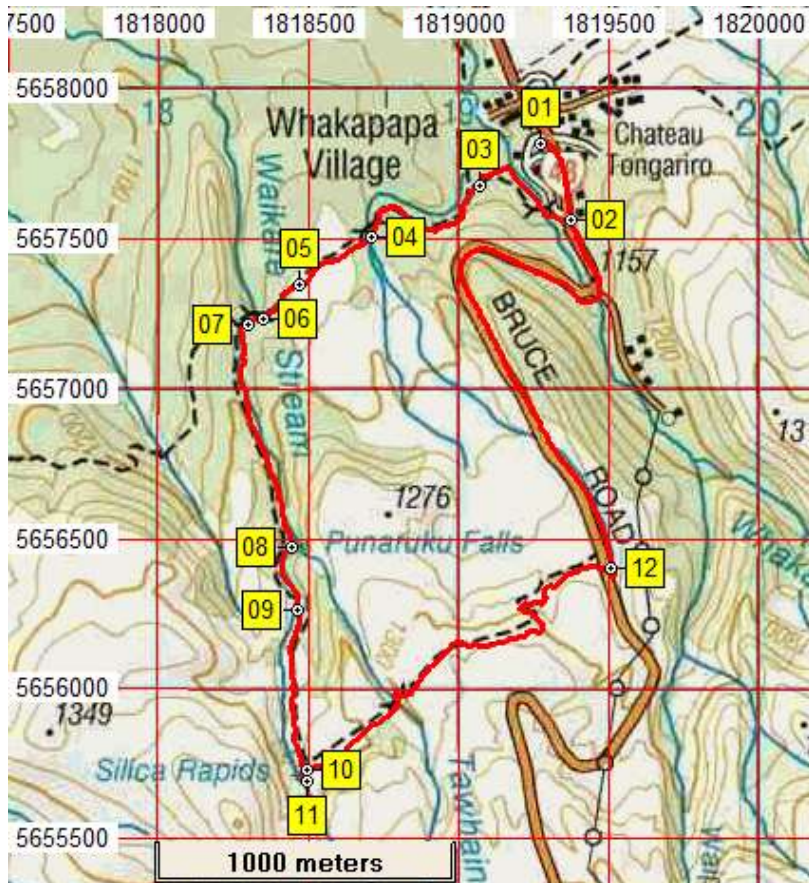


Golden Rapids

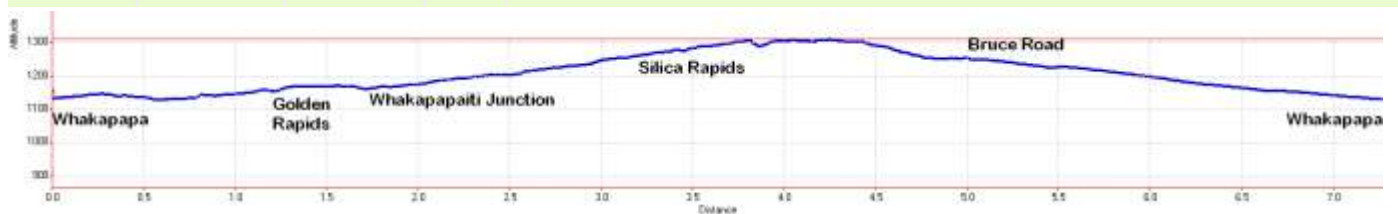


Silica Rapids





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1819272	5657816	1133	Car park with toilet opposite Chateau
02	1819374	5657560	1144	3-4 min (300m); Entrance to signposted tracks on RHS of road
03	1819069	5657677	1132	10min (700m); T-junction go straight, right for Whakapapanui Walk
04	1818710	5657505	1156	16-20min (1.3km); Golden Rapids, up to open area and boardwalk
05	1818473	5657346	1170	25min (1.5km); Seat with views, down hill and back into forest
06	1818347	5657235	1160	43min (1.7km); Wooden bridge in Montane Forest - mainly beech (silver)
07	1818298	5657216	1165	44min (1.8km); Y-junction, right goes to Whakapapaiti Hut
08	1818443	5656471	1212	58min (2.6km); Punaruku Falls, hardly visible through trees on LHS
09	1818464	5656261	1233	1:02min (2.8km); Valley opens up, cross stream onto boardwalk
10	1818494	5655731	1280	1:14min (3.4km); Y-fork + sign for Bruce Road and Silica Rapids
11	1818496	5655695	1284	1:15min (3.41km); Silica Rapids platform
12	1819507	5656403	1255	2hrs (5.01km); Bruce Road 30min or just over 2.5km from Whakapapa



Silica Rapids platform



Kaikawaka tree



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