

TALL CHIMNEY BIV

Topo50 Map: BH34 Raurimu

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

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

- Turn right from SH1 to SH41 then left to SH47
- Pass junction to SH46 on the left
- Pass entrance for Outdoor Pursuits Centre (OPC) on the right
- Locate John McDonald Road off right – this is gravel forest road
- Branch left off John McDonald to Pukehinau Road (look for the sign to the caves) and continue to the small car park with toilet sign (WP01).

The route to the start from SH47 can be followed opposite and takes about half an hour driving, the total time from Taupo is about 2 hours.

Rough description: A moderate tramp offering some new views of the mountain of 11km in around 5 hours on quite a tricky unmarked back-country track – in fact most of the track used is degraded four wheel quad bike track. If the correct road, tracks and turns are located navigation is easy. Wet feet are guaranteed, unless rock-hopping or water walking is a talent, as the Okupata Stream is crossed and this can be knee deep with slippery rocks. The tramp is graded moderate as walking is not easy with many slippery sections plus exposure to lots of “cutty” grass.



Detail: From the car park (WP01 596masl) head off NW on the road for 6 - 7minutes and turn off (WP02603masl) on to a track which is badly overgrown, rather steep in places and requires care as it can be slippery as it heads down to the Okupata Stream. Even during dry spells this can be a tricky crossing as it can be calf to knee deep and the rocks are slippery in places. Once over the stream head off uphill on the old 4WD drive track, watch the little bridge as the gullies at either side seem bottomless, and admire or otherwise the abundance of heather and endless “cutty” grass which will badly lacerate any exposed skin on hands and knees. Within half an hour or so a minor crest (WP03656masl) is reached and a track heading left (WSW) has to be located and followed as it fights its way steeply uphill – it is rough through erosion, very badly overgrown and slippery in parts. In a bit over an hour the crest (WP04748masl) is reached after this grunt where views are obtained of the pretty rugged, forested country around. A sample of the ruggedness is now tackled as the track, almost road width, descends quite steeply and is tricky as it is very rocky and polished in places. The next half hour is on rolling track but nothing too tricky at all then there is an open area (WP05713masl) with great views of Ngauruhoe and Mnt Ruapehu but be careful as there is a slip on the edge of this viewpoint. Immediately after this fresh tyre tracks may be found as this point is accessible from the 42nd traverse by quad bikes.

Steep rocky road



After 1:30 – 1:45minutes the way ahead can be seen with the track visible for some distance as it passes through an area of yellowish clays – more slippery stuff – to arrive at a bend where the main 4WD track goes right but a narrow rough, very slippery branch (WP07767masl) goes left to rejoin the main track at a major meeting of the ways– about 5 tracks merge in an open area with reddish soil (WP08747masl). A small cairn has been set here to mark the return track to use. However the road can be used instead of the slippery track.

Ngauruhoe



Follow the track heading SW out of this junction and soon the slopes vanish and it is level going, though tricky due to bushes and branches being placed on the track for grip by the 4WD users. A stand of blue gums (WP09724masl) is the next thing to look out for and there are many DOC traps in the local area of this wide track.

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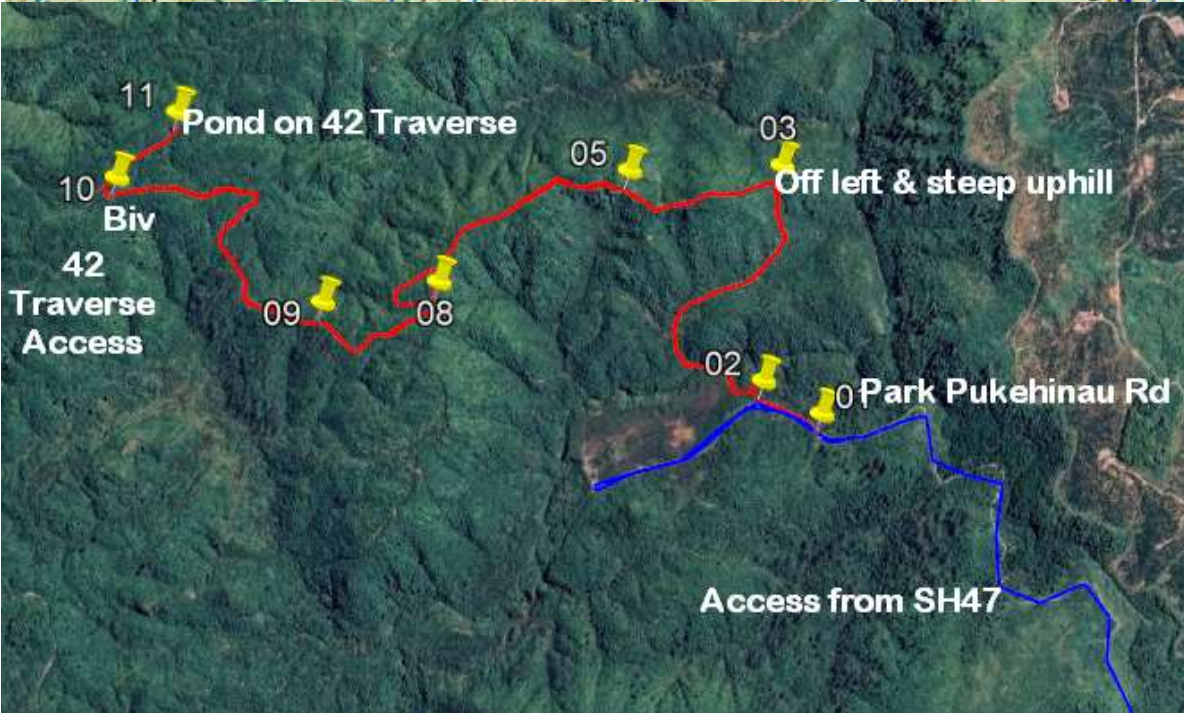
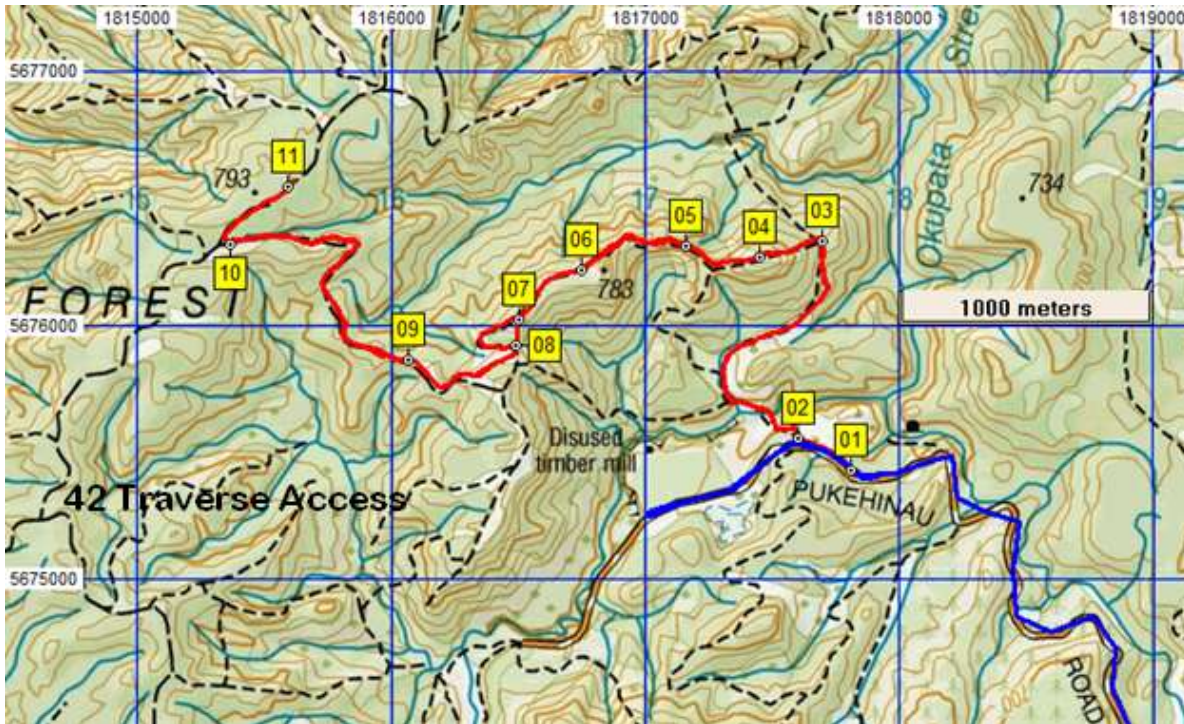
Fifteen minutes later there is a junction (WP10776masl) and the bivouac, covered in tarpaulins – many of them with the NZ Rail logo - is situated on this junction. There are several beds, tables, cupboards plus cooking gear and a light fed from a bank of car batteries. The floor is wooden with huge metal plate all around the wood-burner.

A few minutes NE up the gravel road (the 42 Traverse) there is a tarn (WP11783masl) or pond on the left which is the local water supply.

Total time for the round trip is about 5 hours though walking time is only 4 hours over the 5.5km each way with about 500metres of ascent / descent in and out.

Man-sized wood-burner





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1817808	5675431	596	Car park about 11km NW off SH47 on Pukehinau Road. DoC toilet. Walk NW on road to bend.
02	1817602	5675557	603	8min (284m); NW off gravel road, steeply downhill on overgrown slippery track to cross Okupata Stream
03	1817695	5676331	656	47min (1.6km); WSW off main track at minor crest, steeply uphill on very rough, overgrown 4WD track
04	1817448	5676269	748	1:16min (1.9km); Crest after grunt with cutty grass then steeply down on slippery rock track
05	1817160	5676315	713	1:32min (2.2km); Open with good views at edge of slip after rolling slopes. Then on to 4WD track.
06	1816747	5676218	774	1:44min (2.7km); More open area with track visible ahead, slippery yellowish clays
07	1816501	5676023	767	1:54min (3km); Bend in 4WD track, use branch off left to slippery 4WD track. Return on rd loop.
08	1816488	5675919	747	1:59min (3.2km); Rejoin main track at opening with red soil. Small cairn marks return route track
09	1816064	5675863	724	2:06min (3.7km); Level area with stand of Blue Gums on LHS (SW). Wide 4WD and many DoC traps
10	1815364	5676320	776	2:27min (4.9km); Junction with Tall Chimney Bivouac plus motorable road
11	1815590	5676546	783	20min (350m) NE of Biv on good gravel (42nd Traverse) road. Pond or tarn on LHS of road.



Notes: GPS: Garmin GPSMap 62cs on WGS84
Wpt: Waypoints as taken by GPS unit
Masl: metres above sea level