

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North 4440 www.mtsc.org.nz <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

Issue 2: March 2016



Club meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Street, Palmerston North (next to the Lido). Meetings begin at 7.30pm.

Tuesday 1st March: The 4,300 km Pacific Crest Trail [PCT]

Glenn Pendergast

In 2015 Glenn Pendergast spent five months hiking the 4,300 km Pacific Crest Trail [PCT] from the Mexican border through California, Oregon and Washington State to Canada. The PCT follows the mountainous spine of these three states through 7 National Parks, 4 National Monuments, 5 State Parks, 25 National Forests and 48 Federal Wilderness Areas with a total elevation gain of over 128,000 meters and with a high point of over 4,000 meters in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It was a great adventure.



Tuesday 5th April: Lunana Snowman Trek, Bhutan

Jill Dalton

The Lunana Snowman Trek crosses a rarely visited region of the Eastern Himalayas. More people have climbed to the summit of Mt Everest than completed this traverse of Bhutan. It is a 28 day trek covering 356kms and crossing eight Himalayan mountain passes, the highest being Gopu la at 5,466m. Jim Hepburn and Jill Dalton joined 9 other trekkers to complete this trek in September/October 2015.



REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President Report: John Beech

president@mtsc.org.nz



January has ticked over and now the warmest weather seems to be upon us. I spent three days in the North Eastern Ruahines over the Christmas break completing the loop from Parks Peak through to Aranga then along the main range to Upper Makororo and out to the Sentry Box. The section between Parks Peak and Upper Makororo was new to me and I must say it was a beautiful area of the Ruahines, helped by three days of stunning weather. We camped outside Aranga and it was sad to see this hut almost in ruins. It has obviously not had any maintenance since DOC gave it up in the 1990s. It sits in an ideal spot; more or less a halfway point on the loop around to Parks Peak and it is a shame to see it in such a state of disrepair. However, looking at some of the work that is being done around the country by volunteers it is encouraging to know that some of these old NZFS huts are being restored back to their former glory. Much of this work is happening in the South Island although there are groups up here volunteering their time such as the exNZFS group doing great work in the Tararuas. Of course other clubs and our own are also looking after some of these huts. Although the chronic underfunding of DOC is less than ideal, at least the community is picking up some of the slack.

The Community fund that DOC has set up is also making it much easier for volunteers to be involved. This is proving to be a very successful partnership between the volunteers and DOC. In fact, a few friends and I, along with the Technology department at my school are building a new long drop for Gold Creek. This has only been possible through the fund administered by the Outdoor Recreation Consortium consisting of FMC, NZDA and Trail fund.

So while we are all enjoying the tracks and huts in the bush I would encourage us all to take a few minutes to carry out the odd bit of maintenance. Even moving the odd branch off the track, reporting breakages in huts to DOC or replacing rat bait all helps keep our facilities in good order.

Enjoy the fine and warm weather while it lasts.

John

MTSC Chief Guide Report: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz



We have recently had a trip with a PLB activation followed shortly after by a helicopter evacuation. When a PLB is activated the RCC (Rescue Coordination Centre) rings our two contact people, Peter Rawlins and Howard Nicholson, to gather background information and ensure it isn't a false alarm. This is a gentle reminder to use the club's "intentions" email address so they can respond with accurate information. As well as your phone number include anyone's who might be concerned if you are late back so they can be kept in the picture. The "intentions" email goes to several people so it is unlikely all will be unavailable at the same time.

Feel free to use the "intentions" email for your private trips too, although remember that it only ever gets looked at if a concerned person phones. Who should a concerned person phone? Direct your next of kin (now) to the "Overdue Trips" information box on the trip card for contact phone numbers.

New walking access to Otaki Forks

This is a temporary access track to allow trampers to get in and out of Otaki Forks while the Otaki Gorge Road is closed due to a dropout on the road near Blue Bluff. This access track is 5.1km one way, takes about 2 hours and dogs are only allowed if kept on a leash.

Description: Starting at Shields Flat Historic Reserve car park (13km down the Otaki Gorge Road), follow the directional signs and walk across the paddocks along the fence line. Once over the fence in the corner follow a mixture of orange triangles and directional signage up through a plantation of pine on a bulldozer track. A sign will direct you down a ridge through native forest; the steepest section on this track. At the bottom of the ridge the track pops out onto a private vehicle track that can be followed all the way down to the Otaki Gorge Road. Follow the road to Otaki Forks. Access on this track has been provided by two private landholders and will be removed when vehicle transport is restored to Otaki Forks.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/wellington-kapiti/places/tararua-forest-park/things-to-do/tracks/otaki-forks-emergency-access-track/?region=WellingtonKapiti&park=17342b0c-f316-4ea2-91a1-4500831062c5&activity=Walking-tramping#findplaces>

Access to the Mid-Pohangina sidle track

Mark, the new owner who has taken over Kevin Billet's farm, has put new signage up at the access gate outlining the conditions (see below) for crossing the piece of private land to access the track. Please follow all conditions; hopefully if everybody behaves we'll all continue to enjoy the access!

THIS PRIVATE ACCESS HAS CHANGED OWNERS. PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE PREVIOUS OWNER.

THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY – ACCESS IS BY THE GOODWILL OF THE LANDOWNER. TO KEEP THIS ACCESS OPEN COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- NO DOGS
- NO VEHICLE ACCESS
- NO LOADED FIREARMS / NO HUNTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY
- NO SPOTLIGHTING
- NO FIRES
- ABUSE OF ACCESS WILL RESULTS IN TRESPASS / PROSECUTION AND CLOSURE OF PUBLIC ACCESS PERMANENTLY

HAZARDS INCLUDE

- LIVESTOCK, PARTICULARLY BULLS
- STEEP TRACK WITH BLUFF ON RIGHT SIDE
- RIVER CROSSINGS

ACCESS CAN BE CLOSED FOR FARMING OPERATIONS AT ANYTIME

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION ON 06 3509700

Notes from the Ruahine User Group Meeting

DOC realignment. Things are settling in after the latest DOC realignment, there is the intention to have better communications with users and more interaction with volunteers.

Track cutting. The track cutting activity this summer has been focused on the North Eastern Ruahines, the aim is to cut around 100km of track each year which with about 500km of tracks within the park means most get cut every 5 years. Higher standard tracks like Sunrise and Rangī get cut more often. It was suggested that the Mid-Pohangina sidle track and the Iron Gates track be done next year.

DOC Huts. Waipawa Forks has had the reinforcing mesh removed from the windows above the bunks so they can be used as an emergency exit. The Sparrowhawk biv water tank has been cleaned out; biggest issue was the rusty tap. The unsafe firebox has been removed from TripleX, it will be replaced. The plywood over the window at Top Maropea is being replaced; the hut will also be lifted as infill has washed in under the hut. Kylie biv needs repiling, it is hoped to do this at the same time as the work on Top Maropea – interestingly repiling is a much cheaper option than removal or relocation. Ellis hut has some new exterior cladding. Longview has been supplied with firewood. The Iron Gates window has been fixed. The Tamaki road end loos are having water issues; a plan is being worked on and will be put into next year's funding round. Shutes hut needs earthquake strengthening but it is not high on the National Historic list of works. It was noted that Aranga hut is actually on DOC land, it is 60m within the park boundary. If you are planning a trip to any Ruahine huts and don't mind carrying a bit of extra weight feel free to ring Ken Mills (Kaiopoi) through DOC to see if rat bait or a new logbook is required.

Community maintained huts. The Mid-Pohangina door latch has been replaced. Te Ekau has had the gutters cleaned and reattached, still needs painting and a new stainless steel bench is currently being sourced. Diggers has had a tidy up but still requires safety barriers for the bunks and for the bunks to be screwed to the walls. A new toilet for Gold Creek hut is in the process of being built. Cattle Creek needs the skylight over the veranda replaced. Forks needs the new meat safe to be dug into the ground. Daphne needs painting. Waikamaka is seeking funding for a deck, porch and new tank. Kiritaki needs painting. Makeratu may need an axe.

Access. Access is open to the Mid-Pohangina sidle track; DOC is putting in some stiles and poles. Access to Te Ekau and Forks has been high so the landowners are limiting numbers and currently all access places are filled. It was noted that several owners of private land that is crossed to reach the park have died in the last year. It pays to check the DOC website or with DOC directly if you are accessing the Ruahines across private land to see what the current access status is.

Biodiversity. The Orua trap lines are going well with a good supply of volunteers for checking/baiting/clearing. The self-resetting traps in the Pohangina valley have had a couple of checks/rebait this summer. The Tunapo loop now has a complete set of traps all the way round. It is desired to put a trap line in from Longview to Leon Kinvig with DOC flying in the traps and volunteers spreading them along the line. It would be good to have a volunteer base from the Dannevirke/Waipuk/Hawkes Bay area for regular maintenance, contact Janet Wilson jwilson@inspire.net.nz if you are interested in helping out. The Northern Ruahine trap lines have been having monthly checks, ring Ken Mills (aka Kaiopoi) at DOC if you are interested in doing a check of this line. Work is being done on old mans beard, especially around the Manawatu gorge and spot work is being carried out on contorta and goats, please report sighting of either of these to DOC.

We welcome Anna Hammington to the club



Trip Intentions: The email address for leaving trip intentions is intentions@mtsc.org.nz. Intentions sent to this address will not be acted upon UNLESS a party is reported overdue (e.g. by a family member, flatmate, friend, etc). The email is sent to several MTSC members. This information will be provided to LandSAR/RCC only if the party is reported overdue or a PLB is activated. The email should include: a list of participants and their contact details; a brief description of the intended route and possible alternative routes; starting point; start date; date/time due out; vehicle registration; and any other relevant details.

March Wednesday Tramps			March Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone	Date	Date	Date
2	Dennis Jensen	329 3229	3	Hugh Wilde	356 9450
9	Margaret Foot	357 8003	10	David Grant	328 7788
16	Bob Hodgson	356 2915	17	Judy Swainson	358 4082
23	Jill Faulkner	323 6094	24	Geraldine Fovakis	356 4327
30	Ann Bamby	354 1313	31	Graham Pritchard	357 1393

March Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
5-6	West Waitewaewae	Fit	David Harrington	06 8395766
12-13	Mangahao Flats Work Party	All	Jean Garman	021 176 0209
19-20	Bushcraft, Holdsworth road end	All	Tim Swale	06 376 6556
25-28	Easter Ruahines	Medium	Ken Mercer	356 7497

5th – 6th March: West Waitewaewae River

Fit David Harrington 021 240 9056

Starting from the end of North Manakau Road it's up a big climb to the Waitewaewae high point then dropping west down a small spur to the top fork of the West Waitewaewae River. It's then all the way down the West Waitewaewae River to Island Forks and if time allows down the Waitewaewae River as well. Sunday we'll return via the ridge system past Mick and Thompson.

12th – 13th March: Mangahao Flats Work Party

All Jean Garman 021 176 0209 jean.garman@fonterra.com

If you can't get hold of Jean try Jenny 021 215 2197 jmccarthy1.nz@gmail.com

Not only is this a chance to put a little back into the track/hut network we all love to use but it is also a chance to help me celebrate my half century. The plan is to have people walking in in several groups so you can go at the pace you want. The fastest group will do any required track clearing along the way. Once at the hut the normal cleaning will occur but we will focus most of our efforts on vegetation clearance from around the helipad/clearing below the hut. The usual extensive round of nibbles and

drinkies will be followed by a light dinner and birthday cake. On Sunday we can finish any outstanding work and there will be options to head out via the track, down the river or some combination of the two.

19th – 20th March: Bushcraft Course

All Tim Swale 06 3766556 theswales@xtra.co.nz

This instructional weekend will be based at Donnelly Flat near Masterton's Mount Holdsworth Road end. After an initial briefing we will walk the short distance to Donnelly Flat and set up camp. Saturday's programme will be based on the Mountain Safety Council / Outdoor Training New Zealand course which prepares young people for their Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition at Bronze level. Topics to be covered will be: map and compass, route finding, campsite selection, stoves, food for tramping, water safety, outdoor communications, leadership, environmental care code, trip planning, etc. On Sunday we will walk some of the old tracks in the vicinity of Rocky Lookout. Conditions permitting we will finish with a river crossing. There are likely to be a small number of young people participating in this activity so feel free to come along to either brush up on your own skills or to support the youngsters as they start out on their tramping journey.

25th – 28th March: Easter Ruahines

Medium Ken Mercer 356 7497, 027 364 6475

We're going to loop around the top end of the Pohangina River in a leisurely fashion, taking four days for what some do in two. On Friday we'll go via Rangiwahia hut, climbing to the tops and camping at the tarn near Maungamahue. Saturday we'll cross over Te Hekenga to Howletts hut. Sunday we'll head south over Otumore and drop down to Iron Gate hut. From there it's a choice of down the river to Heritage Lodge or a longer route upriver to Triangle and back over the Whanahuia range to exit via Rangiwahia. All, of course, weather dependent.



Thursday 3rd December: Bruce's Hill

Report: Hugh Wilde

Photos: Richard Ellis and John Brock

Bruce's Hill (710m) that we visit about once each year – not to be confused with either Bruce Hill (975m) 2km southwest of Te Mara Trig in the Blue Range, or Mt Bruce – is situated just south of the Mt Bruce Bird Sanctuary on SH2.



At the view point



Lunch spot

Eighteen of us made the trip. Initially there is a small stream to cross, then a gravel path up to the Viewpoint which takes about 20 minutes to reach. From the Viewpoint the Bruce's Hill track (also known

as Braddock's Track) backtracks from the Viewpoint to a 'T' junction and then heads upwards and eastwards along an ungravelled bush track to the lunch spot in grassland a little way southeast of the Bruce's Hill trig. This trig, which you'd miss unless you knew it was there, is just a pipe in the ground on a small rise about 20m from the track in bush. The weather was good – spells of sun but with a cool breeze and a slight hint of rain which didn't eventuate, early afternoon.

Most took about two hours to reach the grassy area, with a few stragglers drifting in a little later. All up, the trip was four hours walking, give or take, and about five hours or so spent on the track. A suitably relaxed trip close to Christmas.

Sunday 17th January: Ngatiawa River

Report: Adam Matich

Photos: Jean Garman

We started off from the Kapakapanui road end (Ngatiawa Road) where parking was really at a premium. After crossing the private land we dropped into the Ngatiawa River and started up-stream. The river was never more than knee deep and was easy travel, being a gentle gradient with not much in the way of boulders. All we had to do was follow the main watercourse. In places the river closed in a bit; gorgy enough that you wouldn't travel there after rain, but in the summer low flows we had no trouble.



Some of the many nice parts of the Ngatiawa River

A little over two hours travel saw us at the eastern branch of the river (BP33 805647, 296m) that we had decided to travel up to Kapakapanui peak. This watercourse was a bit rougher, more boulders and more slippery, but it never got nasty. Somewhat of a disappointment. There were quite a lot of goats and in the sections where the stream and the forest closed in on us we were able to follow the goat trails.



One of the many big spiders



Climbing up the top end of the river

At an almost double confluence (820652) we had to be careful to make sure we took the less obvious tributary, heading NE, and from here about 60m of the climbing was in quite tight country. Somewhere

around 550m the stream opened up again and was really pleasant (although increasingly steep) up to 760m (826660) where we decided it was best to climb the 80m up a gully and then through the trees onto the Maymorn Junction to Kapakapanui track at around 840m. We reached Kapakapanui peak six hours from the car and after a rest in the shade bounded back down to the car (8½ hour day), making a short detour to visit the semi-derelict hut at around 900m, on the way. We were Jean Garman and Adam Matich.



Kapakapanui Trig



Topping up on water at the semi-derelict hut

Sunday 24th January: Tarn Biv

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photos: Nicola Wallace

We arrived at Mill Road end to find there were already at least 5 vehicles there, under the blazing Hawkes Bay sunshine. After a brief chat with the local farmer, we left the car park at about 10am, and perused the elaborate DOC information board, that gave a time of 3 hours to Tarn Biv.

Off down a lovely grassy track, and we soon encountered our first obstacle – a nasty slip, which necessitated precarious scrambling, followed by a drop. Once down the bottom, we soon found a side stream, then the Tukituki River itself. It seemed a very long way up the river (the water was very pleasant), passing the Hinerua Hut turnoff on the way, till we got to the Rosvalls Track turnoff, which was marked by a large orange triangle by the river. Morning tea, up on to the bank, and hello.....a sign.....Tarn Biv, 3 hours. And it had taken us 2 hours to get this far.

There followed a very steep climb out of the river, and we met a hunter soon after the bottom. He'd stayed in Tarn Biv the night before, and he felt that a day trip to the biv and back was quite an undertaking. The climb was hot, but otherwise pleasant, through beech forest. The top half of the climb became extremely hot, and I was glad to get to the top, where there was a fine view of Howletts Hut. After a short wait the others arrived. Looking at the map I had decided that the biv was on the other side of a big knob, and I became concerned that we were getting very late in the day to go that far. A decision was made that we would go as far as the first rise, have a look, and if the Biv wasn't there, we would turn back. Well I'm very pleased to say that I was wrong, for just over the first rise there was the biv, very visible in orange.

A whoop of delight, and we arrived there at about 2.15pm. It was only about 20 minutes from the top of the main climb. Tarn Biv is a gorgeous little 2 bunker, with mattresses and a water tank. The real surprise of the day was the dunny – simply delightful and a pleasure to use. It was a longdrop, with a raised seat, but no walls around whatsoever, so you sat and did your business with the most incredible view, and surrounded by nature.



Tony and Mark outside the biv



The loo with a view!

We lounged around outside the biv for about 30 minutes, before heading back. The trip back out was much quicker, partly because we took a marked track out of the river, which cut out a lot of the river near the end. By now it was very hot. We took a route over the top of the slip, which was quite good, and we were back at the car by 6pm. We were the only car left.

Many thanks to Mark Learmonth and Tony Evans for organising this trip, and Tony for the driving.

Wellington Anniversary Weekend 22nd – 24th January: Walks around Wellington

Report: Alla Seleznyova

Photos: Jinny Andersen, two other walkers/bikers

We started our walking weekend in Wellington on Friday, 22nd January with the Southern Walkway, which starts at Oriental Parade, climbs to the Mt Victoria lookout and goes through Truby King Park and further to Island Bay. It's a beautiful 11km walk with a variety of scenery, from views of the harbour and the central city to the shade and tranquillity of the Town Belt forest. The Truby King gardens, that included paths, wind breaks and garden walls, was an interesting discovery on the way. According to the walkway leaflet, the landscaping of the gardens cost "thousands of pounds". We had our lunch there on an impressive set of steps. We took a bus from Houston Bay to Oriental Parade where we had left our car and proceeded to our accommodation in Karori. On Saturday, we decided to walk from Karori to Red Rocks. Starting with a short accent to Wright hill we followed a 4WD track along the perimeter of Zelandia, and then switched to a walking/MTB track in the direction of Hawkins Hill. This brought us to the beginning of the Red Rocks Track, which followed a ridge and eventually dropped steeply to Red Rocks. The weather was brilliant and we had stunning views of the city and the sea on our way.



Linda and Alla on the Red Rocks Track

From Red Rocks we walked along the beach to Owhiro bay, hoping to get a bus to town. But to our dismay, there was no bus service on weekends and no taxis in sight, so we had to walk to Island Bay to

catch a bus. I am not sure about the distance we walked on this day, but it took us about 6½ hours. On Sunday we went to Eastbourne and walked to the lighthouse (about 16km return). Often when coming on a ferry to Wellington, I looked at the lighthouse and thought “I should go there for a walk one day”, so Sunday was the day. It was a pleasant walk along the beach with a short climb to the lighthouse. The weather was great, but a bit windy at the lighthouse and the views were stunning.



Hiding from the wind at the light house



On the way back from the lighthouse

My companions were Linda Campbell and Jinny Andersen. We enjoyed this weekend and we are planning to go back to do more walking.

Wellington Anniversary Weekend 24rd – 25th January: ~~Tararua Main Range~~ Kiwi Mouth Loop

Report: Adam Matich

Photos: Adam Matich

The forecast for the Tararua tops was gale-force winds so trip leader was badgered into going somewhere else. As the weather was otherwise fine a nice river trip in the Kawekas seemed advisable. But perhaps not as there was ca. 1000m of climbing involved on a hot Hawkes Bay day. It took us around 2 hours to climb from Kuripapango road end to the intersection just west of Kuripapango peak. Fortunately, it was quite windy so the travel across the open tops through to the intersection after pt 1359 was not too nasty. There were certainly lots of views. At the intersection we turned left to head down the Cameron Hut track, and at the next intersection took the cross track north to the Kiwi Saddle to Kiwi Mouth Track which we then followed steeply down to Kiwi Mouth Hut (6½ hr day). On the cross-track we spotted a sika hind; an unusual event for noisy trampers. At the hut we headed straight for Kiwi Creek, as Dave had run out of water and Adam just needed to wallow. The water was not very cold so it was no great shock, and given how warm the day was wet clothing soon dried. The hut was fully occupied by a couple of hunters and the Rangitikei Tramping Club so we slept out. Not really a hardship given the weather.



Te Manihi peak above the Ngaruroro River



Kiwi Mouth hut

Next day we followed the track down-river to the swing-bridge; a proper track (not shown on the map) continued a couple of km further down-river; probably to somewhere around BJ37 820409 where we finally had to get our feet, and other things, wet. There were lots of river crossings, which seemed to be best made just above rapids and eventually with the help of the GPS we found the start of the track (BJ37 821382), that starts a bit up-river of Cameron, which was not glaringly obvious. The exit from the river was up a ramp on a rock face. The track turned out to be severely non-maintained and fearing a dreadful time, we backed out after only 50 metres and decided to try our luck with drowning in the river.

The river turned out to be interesting but OK; no nasty gorges or waterfalls. The last crossing before the bridge-site (removed in 2013 according to the internet) was a bit difficult without walking poles or for a short person, but the run-out was OK so you would only drown if you worked at it. At the time the depth at Kuripapango was 575mm, so anything under 550mm and it should all be plain sailing. Care was needed to spot the track marker at the bridge site, but once found it was an easy romp along the track to Cameron Hut for an early lunch (4¼ hrs). Cameron is yet another of the nice, tidy Kaweka huts in a grassy clearing.



Dave in the Ngaruroro river



Cameron hut

After lunch we dropped into the river again and made our way down to Kuripapango (3 hr). This section of the river was not so much fun, there being quite a lot of slippery rocks, and the river was just less interesting. The last crossing of the day was slightly deep, but failure would most likely merely result in embarrassment and a much needed wash. This section of the river did sport a number of tracks on the flats in the bush and forest, so that made the travel a bit faster in places. We had to pay attention to spot the entrances as they didn't leap out at us. The deepest we went in the river was probably just on waist-deep; it was a bit above the summer low flows (as low as 420mm at Kuripapango) there having been rain a few days before. We were Dave Mitchell and Adam Matich.



Beautiful reflections in the Ngaruroro river

Weekend 30th – 31st January: Hector and Waiohine Rivers

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: Jean Garman and Adam Matich

While a surprising large group of eight congregated at the Waiohine Gorge road end, there were a number of different agendas. Jenny and Bernadette were just out for a day walk to Cone and back. The rest of us were going to continue on along Cone ridge and drop down to Neill Forks hut where Adam, Sara and Paul were to spend the night while David, Brian and Jean carried on down the Hector river in search of a campsite for the night.

Saturday was warm with little wind and a good layer of cloud to protect us from the sun's brutal rays. It was hot and sweaty work climbing up towards Cone, although we still had enough breath left for lots of talking. Lunch was had while still in the mist shrouded goblin forest.



Mist shrouded goblin forest



The group in the mist on Cone

After lunch we carried on upwards popping out into the open to no views what-so-ever. We did check out the tarns on top of Cone before Jenny and Bernadette said goodbye and headed back. After all the climbing it was nice to cruise along the mostly gentle Cone Ridge before the not so gentle drop to Neill Forks hut saw us arriving in time for afternoon tea. In the hut was the gear of two other people who had popped onto the main range to check out the Tararua Peaks ladder. We said see you tomorrow to Adam, Sara and Paul then carried on down the Hector River – almost instant wet feet and before long several waist deep wades followed. The river is not overly difficult but quite close and bouldery so not fast travel. We thought it was about time to stop for the night but there was nothing we could realistically camp 3 people on so we carried on down checking out various bush terraces until a cosy spot was located and we settled in for the night.

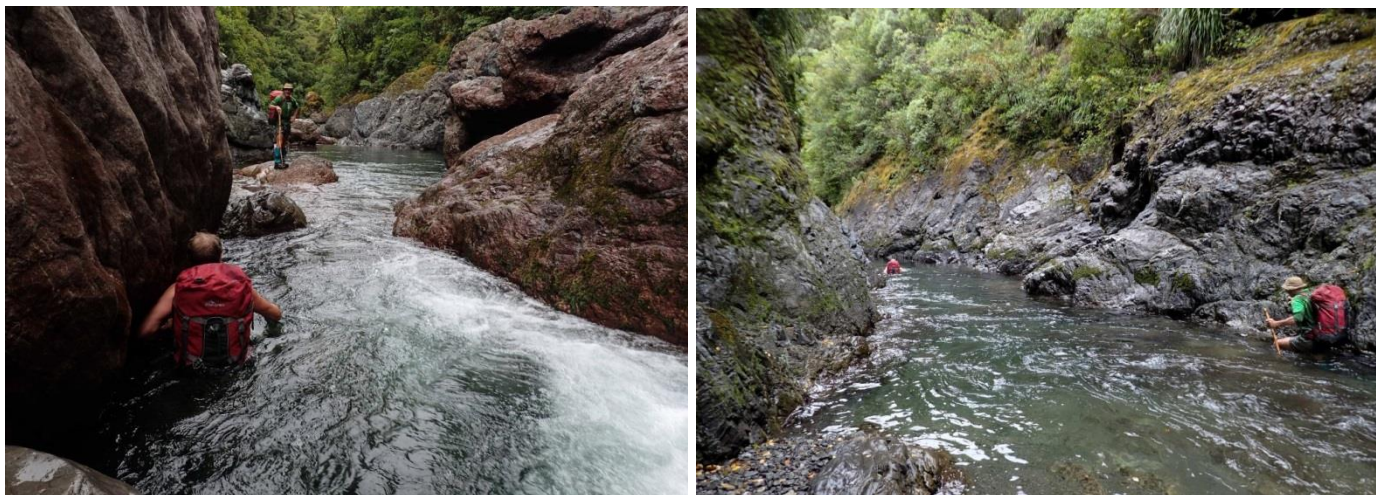


Heading down the hector soon got wet



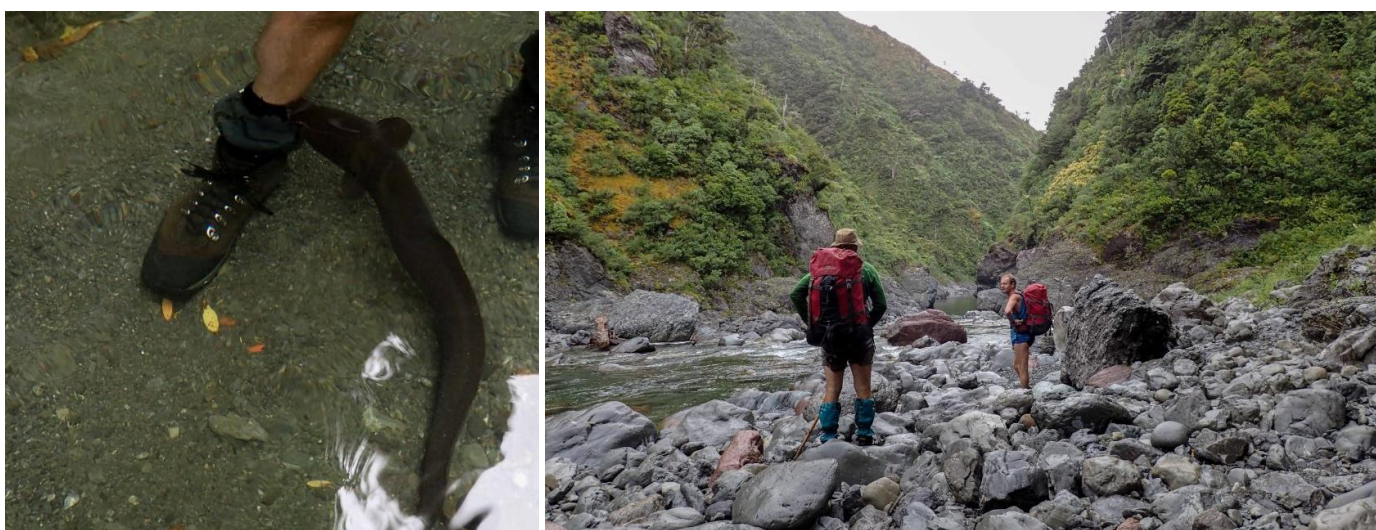
The best campsite we could find

On Sunday morning it was straight back into waist deep wades and soon we were at the final section of the Hector River that had stopped Brian and I on a the "Full Hector" trip quite a few years ago. We had thought we could get down it but doubted we could get back up and we needed to get back up to get to the base of the spur for the next section of the trip. This time we didn't have to get back up the river so we could just go with the flow and a few more wades later it was time to pack float. Being still early in the morning this was a little cold. Very near the intersection with the Waiohine River a friendly eel came to visit. I'm sure it was a girl as it spent a lot of time sniffing Brian's boots and David's legs but had no interest in me at all.



The lower reaches of the Hector river shortly before joining the Waiohine River

The Waiohine River is much bigger and more open than the Hector River. Lots of rock hopping alongside the river, some waist deep crossings and yet more pack floating through the gorgy bits. Brian spotted an inner tube amongst some rocks and bagged it. I spotted the pack tied to it and bagged the pack. David was a smart arse and bagged the pack contents. We carefully inspected the pack and contents trying to find some information on who it might belong to but apart from a sleeping bag, a mosquito net, some clothing, a plate and some back country food packets there was nothing much else in it. Brian took the tube but we left everything else inside the pack liner further up the bag. It was all soaking wet and none of it worth taking out.



The friendly eel

The more open Waiohine River below the Hector junction

Further down the river we suddenly came across footprints, very fresh footprints and before long a couple of hunter/fisher blokes were found at their campsite. They had shot a spiker but not seen much in the way of trout. More rock hopping and pack floating and the Totara Flats swing-bridge came into view. At the hut we meet up with the other three (as planned) enjoying their lunch on the veranda so we joined them. After lunch we were keen to introduce Sara and Paul to the joys of river travel. We walked across the flats then took to the river. They had even taken my advice and had bought their respective bikini bottoms and

speedos. They soon got the hang of rock hopping and river crossings and there were only a few squeals as the water got waist deep and the pack floating began.



The very enjoyable Waiohine River below Totara Flats

Much rock hopping and many pack floats later the very high swing-bridge near the road end came into view and it was a steep climb back to the cars. We also introduced Sara and Paul to the ice cream shop on the Masterton bypass which was enjoyed almost as much as the pack floating.

Sunday 31st January: Makairo track

Report: Linda Campbell

Photos: Linda Campbell

Eight of us met at the Mangatainoka Brewery and set off to the start of the Makairo track in the Waewaepa Range. It was a rather dusty drive due to the dry weather conditions but everyone got to the road end safe and sound. It is a nice easy walk along an old road that was closed in the 1960s due to the rugged terrain and frequent slips. The walk climbs gently for nearly 7 km up to the 'summit' with some excellent views along the way. Over time the vegetation has encroached onto the road and ongaonga can be a trap for the unwary.



We had a very pleasant amble up the track with Helen and her seven year old granddaughter stopping shortly before the 'summit' as that was far enough for short legs. Climbing up onto the hill 'summit' just off the track was an opportunity for twelve year old Chantelle to overcome her fear of heights. After lunch we walked back down catching up with Helen and Anna-Lise before long. It was a lovely walk with mist hugging the hills near the top for most of the walk. The day ended with two carloads stopping in Pahiatua for an ice cream. Many thanks to Helen Peek and Anna-Lise, Chantelle Adshead, Alan Hawkins, Bev and John Simmonds and Helen Davidson for their wonderful, friendly company.

Thursday 4th February: Waiopahu Hut

Report: Royce Mills

Photos: Richard



Big packs for a change

A rest stop with views towards Levin

Ten Thursday trampers headed up to Waiopahu hut for an overnight adventure in fine and very warm weather. We were first to arrive at the hut, but five Te Araroa walkers trickled up during the afternoon, and finally two locals from Levin also arrived for an overnight stay as well. Seventeen of us in an 18 bed hut - but it was all good fun. Meanwhile another four Thursday day walkers had walked up, one to the old hut site and three to Waiopahu hut. They walked out the same day. Three more walked the six discs track as a shorter day walk. Our overnight group set off at 7.30am the next day and continued on over Twin Peak and Richards Knob to walk down the Gable End ridge. A lunch stop was taken at the Ohau River and some chose to have a welcome swim. We were back at the van by 3.30pm. Thanks to Christine for organising a most enjoyable overnight trip.

Sunday 7th February: ~~Otaki Gorges~~, Pourangaki River, Full North Ohau

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: David Harrington and Jean Garman



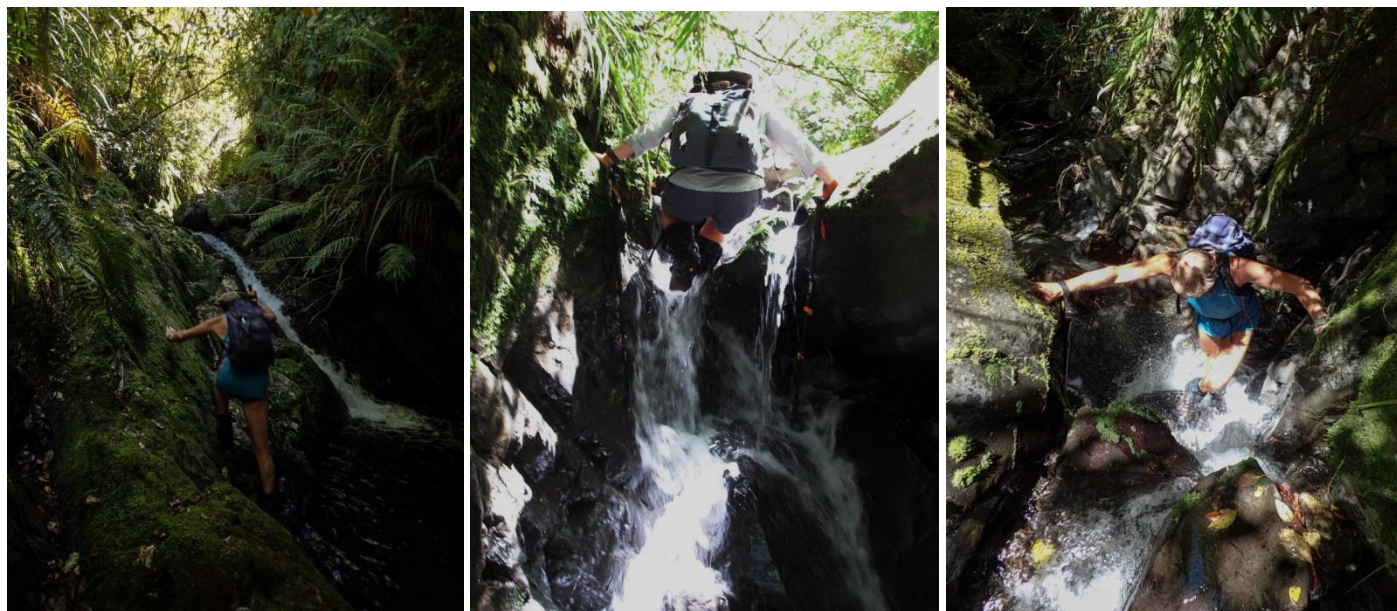
The very cute North Ohau hut



The beautiful clear waters of the North Ohau

The first plan was the 'Otaki Gorges' but then the Otaki Forks road closed when the blue slip let go again. The second plan was a 'full Pourangaki' but as the weekend drew closer the forecast looked pretty messy and was very changeable. The third plan was to do the 'full North Ohau' day trip originally planned for the 20th December, but relocated on the day due to unfavourable weather at the time. David and I left the Poads Road end at 8.30am on Sunday morning and skipped up the track and the river to North Ohau hut. It was hot and sunny with very little wind and the river level was low.

After a quick break we carried on up the river beyond the hut. The going was not bad, a few pools and cascades/waterfalls to clamber up and/or around but nothing too tricky.



Clambering up and/or around various cascades/waterfalls

As we neared the top of the marked river there was not always water present in the stream bed anymore and where the stream bed tightened into a narrow gut we chose to climb up to the ridge to the north. Once up on the ridge we picked up the trail that runs over Square Knob and down towards the pine plantation. Towards the end of this trail we dropped off the side back down into the Ohau River. It was easy enough to climb up onto the farmland but Jean was too much of a whimper to climb over the fence with the electric outrigger. David scrambled over just fine but Jean opted to pass her pack over then wriggle underneath. David, being a gentleman, tried to assist as it was a tight squeeze but unfortunately a loud crack saw him sitting on the ground much to Jean's amusement. We were back to the car park by 6.30pm after 10 hours of fun!

Wednesday 10th February: Cattle Creek Hut

Report: Russell Poole

Photos: Leonie Lowndes

Leaving from Memorial Park at 7.30am, a party of about thirty started the actual tramp at 8.45am. A hot and sticky day was in store, with occasional showers to cool things down marginally. We chose to follow the Holmes Ridge route on the way in. Attention to markers, some added by the trip leader and her able reconnaissance team, helped in finding the route down to the river and then back up to Stanfield Hut. The official markers, though large and orange, are currently partially obscured by vigorous toetoe clumps.

The majority group made its destination a lunch stop at the hut. Most of this group stuck to the Ridge for the return trip but a few braved the West Tamaki Stream, despite off putting talk about dense buddleia and hidden snags.

For the other eight of the party, the onward route led past Stanfield Hut and along the stream until we reached a prominent orange triangle signalling a return to dry land and a fairly steep climb for 25 minutes. This brought us to tussock for a further 15 minutes until we arrived at the turnoff to Cattle Creek. Another

45 minutes easy walking put us on an open stretch of the ridge which in fine weather would provide fine views down to Cattle Creek and onward toward Mid-Pohangina. As we had our lunch we could certainly make out the hut, with its tasteful orange decor (clearly a piece of “themeing” hereabouts, since the same hue has been used for Stanfield Hut).



Lunch on the ridge



View down to Cattle Creek hut

The ‘endangered’ lunch

Debate ensued as to which noble volunteer was going to drop off the bank down to the hut, committing themselves some twenty minutes of hard slog on the return leg, so as to do our duty by signing the book. Strangely, nobody stepped up to the plate on this occasion. Our tranquil enjoyment of our respective lunches (one endangered lunch shown in the accompanying photos) and Sue's account of an eerie montane phenomenon called the "Brocken Spectre" was punctuated by mysterious distant noises, as of heavy machinery. It was only when the clouds and mists momentarily parted that we realised that these thumps and crashes emanated from a quarry at about our height on the next range. Whether this is one of New Zealand's thousands of unregistered quarries would be interesting to know.



Inside Stanfield Hut

The walk back included fine views of Wharite standing in scorching sunshine while we tramped in drizzle and showers. All trampers were out and at the road head by approximately 4pm and we were fortunate enough to find the Yummy Mummy cafe in Woodville still open (just) and willing to serve us.

Our thanks to trip leader Leonie and her fellow pathfinders for this excellent trip, which covered ground new to some of us, and also to Evan for driving the van and to the various car-drivers.

Thursday 11th February: Ngatiawa River

Report: Royce Mills

Photos: John Brock

Twenty-three Thursday trampers set off to explore the Ngatiawa River, in behind Waikanae. We parked at the same car park as for the Kapakapanui track, but instead of climbing, spent the day splashing up-river. The idea came from reading a report of a weekend tramp up this river (Beechleaves May 2015). Thanks to Adam for this idea and further helpful phone discussion with him before the trip. The report described this as an easy, shallow, attractive river, and it certainly is!

I had been hoping to make this tramp a circuit and made two exploration trips in January. The first was with Owen and three Wednesday trampers - Dennis, Leonie and Christine F. We explored the river and found the old track that Adam told us about. It leads from the river and up to the track that follows the ridgeline above the Ngatiawa catchment. In our attempts to make a circuit we found the start of a track down on the way back. Unfortunately the track petered out and we had to descend fairly steeply off-track through the bush and loose rocks back to the stream. No good for a Thursday tramp ...

The second exploration was with John Doolan. We walked up the river and took a side tributary to try and reach the bulldozed track above. It started well but the stream became choked with vegetation and windfall and was quite impassable. I was keen to continue climbing so we had a go at a very steep climb up to the top of a side ridge (scree, very dense vegetation, hanging on to trees...). We made it up to the track, but also not a good route for a Thursday tramp.



Heading up the Ngatiawa river



Where are we now?

Thursday 11th February was a hot day, perfect for wet feet and splashing about. Our group of 23 walked up-river for about 3 hours, looking a bit like a wet pilgrimage. We enjoyed a lunch stop and then retraced our steps. A highlight for some on the way back was finding a pool deep enough to float about a bit and get really wet - a refreshing cool down!

With such a large group we needed several cars, thanks very much to all the drivers on the day.



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New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Seconder who are current MTSC members and have been so for at least one year. New memberships are confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting. Prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. For further information or an application form please see the club website.

Club Equipment

Hire equipment: we have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, tent flies (small and large), snow mats, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies, food dehydrator and two bivvy bags. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. We have two personal locator beacons (PLB) for which there is no charge. Contact the Gear Custodian: Peter Rawlins on (06) 356 7443.

Website www.mtsc.org.nz

This contains club information, photos, contact details and back issues of this newsletter, Beechleaves. The club website is maintained by Howard Nicholson (06) 357 6325 and is kindly hosted by **Inspire Net**, a locally based company.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mount Ruapehu

The lodge is close to Iwikau Village, has power, heating, hot showers and is stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome. For Lodge bookings email Liz and Hugh Wilde lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz or phone (06) 356 9450. To confirm your booking, payment must be made by cheque to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410, by cash in person or internet payment (please email to confirm before depositing) Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300.

	Members	Guests
Adult	\$35	\$50
Secondary School	\$28	\$43
Primary School	\$23	\$38
Pre-school (3-5 yo)	\$10	\$10

The Lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860.

Booking the MTSC Van

For bookings: Contact Ken Mercer (06) 356 7497. Cancellations should be made as soon as practicable to accommodate other potential users. A fly (in the passenger door) and a Personal Locator Beacon (in the glove box) are available for use free of charge on trips.