

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 11: December 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 6th December: MTSC end of year WALK and MEAL



Following the pattern of our previous end of year dinner walks we will assemble in the Manawatu Gorge Car Park (Ashhurst End) at 5pm for a 5:15pm (prompt) start. Then, come hail or shine, we will walk the 4km Tawa Loop (<http://www.manawatunz.co.nz/item/te-apiti-manawatu-gorge-tawa-loop/>). On emergence we will transform from trampers to more or less elegant dinners and head to "The Ashhurst Inn" at 8 York Street, Ashhurst, by 7pm to be joined by anybody unable by reason of other commitments or affliction to join the Looping Walkers. There is plenty of parking to the rear of the Inn.

If you plan to attend please let me know names ASAP and definitely before Wednesday 30th November, Bob Hodgson, Social Convenor, rmsbhodgson@inspire.net.nz

<http://www.ashhurstinn.co.nz/home> Main Meals range in price from \$17 to \$28 and there will be a small charge for the breads and dips to be served on our arrival. There are vegetarian and non-red meat options available.

Tuesday 7th February: The Ruataniwha Dam, and DOCs Heritage Stewardship, John Beech



The Ruataniwha dam has been a controversial issue ever since the HBRC (Hawkes Bay Regional Council), introduced the concept in 2010. Many interested groups have taken part in the debate. As recreational users of the Ruahine Forest Park the effects of the dam on it are our major concern. Farmers, the government and local councillors look at it from the economic benefits. Forest and Bird and other NGO's look at it from the environmental costs perspective.

How do we balance the needs and wants of all three? I will try and give a balanced view.

To balance this serious topic we will start the meeting with a 10min video that Shane Veale put together for his Dad Bill (present for Bill's 70th birthday) of their December 2015 trip down the Pohangina River and through Cattle Creek and Standfield. It's a mix of still shots and video footage to music that shows the countryside, the huts, a deer they shot and some blue ducks.

REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President Report: John Beech

president@mtsc.org.nz



Hi all, Another year has almost come to a close and I am sure we all agree that they seem to go faster as time passes. Hopefully as we look back on the last 11 months we will have all spent some quality time in the outdoors whether skiing, tramping, biking or whatever else. As summer is almost upon us I hope we can all find time over the Christmas break to enjoy the outdoors.

Perusing the Facebook pages reveals a plethora of trips throughout the southern North Island but also a smattering to the South Island as well. My own tramping for the year has been somewhat less than normal due to the body misbehaving. Hopefully I will get to test it a bit more over the next few weeks as I head off to Abel Tasman for our annual school trip.

There has also been much activity over the year within the outdoors community with various policies and decisions by DOC coming under intense scrutiny by the community, often through FMC.

This brings me to my next point that is concerned with FMC's Special General Meeting (SGM) coming up on the 19th Nov in Wellington. This will be to vote on some changes to FMC's rules and to approve the fee increase for FMC membership. I would like to comment on the latter which, of course, will affect all clubs. Since being on the Executive it has become apparent to me that all is not well within the outdoors. Without boring you with a myriad of detail, there is huge pressure on the conservation estate, particularly from tourism. As I have mentioned in previous columns, DOC managers have made some decisions that, I believe, have been created through pressure from the tourism industry with little thought of the consequences for the conservation estate and recreation of club members and the NZ public. Of course I am not against tourism and I am more than happy for tourists to visit our beautiful places. However, the balance is very difficult to find and the government seem to be more interested in tourism potential rather than looking at what's good for us or the pressure on the environment. After all we don't want to kill the golden goose do we. This is where FMC and other NGO's step in to try and advocate on behalf of the outdoor community. Unfortunately, this is requiring more and more time and money. Therein lies the problem, FMC is reliant upon its members' fees to carry out all their functions. There is very little income from other sources hence the reason for the proposed fee increase. The amount of time and effort put into advocacy is increasing every year and this is putting a big drain on FMC's finances. I'm sure none of us need reminding of the issues in our own back yard that FMC has dealt with over the year, let alone the rest of the country. If you wish to know more about the SGM, here is the link <http://www.fmc.org.nz/circulators/>. I will be voting on your behalf at the SGM to approve the motions as directed by your committee.

On a brighter note I hope you all have an enjoyable Christmas/New Year break and get out and about during the finer weather. And don't forget about the end of year walk and function. Here's the link to the information

<http://www.mtsc.org.nz/meetings.php>

Till next year, John

MTSC Chief Guide Report: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz



The club van was one year old when we bought it in 2006 and has now traveled 200,000 km. By commercial vehicle standards it's only middle aged but should we consider replacing it? Why, and with what? Do we want a similar, long wheelbase, vehicle with storage for packs or should we return to towing a trailer? A high or low roof?

The current van is worth \$5,000 – \$10,000. We can afford a new vehicle but its depreciation will cost us a similar amount each year. We currently have two airbags which is unchanged on newer Fords although they do add EBA to the ABS. What else should we consider? Please email me with your thoughts!

Notes from the Tararua Aorangi Rimutaka Huts Committee meeting

HUTS **CONE HUT** Work has been carried out by TTC; the skylight and cooking bench replaced and the area below bunk blocked off (stop rubbish being left there) so it is looking cleaner and brighter. There are plans to repaint and for some trees to be cut back from around the hut by a DOC arborist. **CATTLE RIDGE HUT** The restoration of Cattle Ridge hut is still planned to proceed; the agreement is for restoration not on-going maintenance. **NICHOLS HUT** Planned to be painted over summer, but there is an extensive list of other things that need to be done. A new estimate of likely costs is being compiled. **KAPAKAPANUI HUT** To be painted inside and out; DOC supplied paint with Kapiti NZDA carrying it in and carrying out the work. **MID WAIOHINE HUT** Work (funded by the ORC) hopefully to be completed before Christmas; the window with a rotten frame replaced and the roof replaced (donation of colour steel roofing iron, other materials purchased). Roof replacement is very important as water is starting to get into the

ceiling space which will lead to rot in the framing; this is an issue for many of these huts of this age, luckily quite a few of the Tararua NZFS70's have already been reroofed. **ARETE FORKS HUT** As the ORC couldn't fund both Mid Waiohine and Arete Forks (funds almost used up), a request was made to the TARHC for funds for work on Arete Forks planned for this summer (\$4800) this work has DOC support. **WAIOTARU HUT** AREC are hoping to demolish and rebuild the Waiotaru hut. There is money available from the ORC but still working on an agreement with DOC (an agreement for the road has been reached). DOC does not want ownership of the hut as it will then be required to depreciate the asset which is an additional cost to DOC. If AREC has ownership but ceases to exist in the future what happens with ownership? Can the TARHC own assets? FMC is working on this issue as it is relevant around the country. **RENATA HUT** Currently looked after by one person, it is not in the hut ticket system and is one of the few remaining 'club' type huts. The hut is in reasonable shape, DOC have made an offer of paint and helo support but are yet to get a response. **DUNDAS HUT** It is planned to paint Dundas this summer. **ALPHA HUT** To get a new roof, the Hutt Valley NZDA are looking to take over maintenance of Alpha once the roof is replaced, hopefully not too many issues will be revealed when the roof is removed. The Hutt Valley NZDA will be invited to join the TARHC. **TARN RIDGE HUT** Managed by DOC, is very mouldy - might be possible to get the mattress covers replaced.

All huts are inspected by DOC on a regular basis with a list of tasks sent to the club responsible (Mangahao Flats is in good shape ☺). FMC is looking for sustainable funding; possibility of forming a trust and getting money from the annual hut pass purchases. Looking to see some huts to be returned to annual hut pass eligibility, currently annual hut passes are not used much for booked huts as can't be used for on-line bookings.

TRACKS and ROADS Track cutting is planned for the 6 discs track, the Renata loop and the Ruamahunga river track. The Aokaparangi to Isabelle track is being finished in conjunction with the nest project Kaka monitoring. Track cutting frequency can be influenced by feedback on issues, let Hayden know if anything needs attention. The clearing of the Otaki Forks road was made easier and significantly cheaper by Tony Groome allowing waste to be dumped on a nearby wood block to form skids.

Ruahine Volunteer Hut Wardening

DOC is aiming to have volunteer hut wardens on duty at Sunrise and Rangiwahia huts as much as possible over the busy summer period. The role of these hut wardens will be to help all hut users enjoy their stay by checking hut tickets and providing information. Wardens may also be asked to carry out basic cleaning and maintenance tasks. Fuel vouchers will be provided as a contribution towards transport costs.

Ideally, we would like hut wardens to have some local knowledge and be familiar with the NZ backcountry. Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club members would be fantastic!

So, we would really appreciate your help – please let club members know about the upcoming warden duties and ask anyone interested to email manawatuvolunteers@doc.govt.nz.



December Wednesday Tramps			December Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone	Date	Leader	Phone
7	Jenny Orange	357 3380	1	Nigel & Jill Spencer	329 8738
14	Evan & Coralie Davies	357 6288	8	Normal Cooper	357 5531
January Wednesday Tramps			15	John Doolan	355 5495
Date	Leader	Phone			
7	Jenny Orange	357 3380			

The Next Trip Card: Winter (April-October) 2017

Now that the summer trip card has been printed, it is time to start thinking about all the exciting trips **you want to see or to lead** on the next winter trip card. At random times, people think of trips they would like to go on or lead but forget about them before it is trip card compilation time again. To get around this problem we have put a form for the next trip-card in a Google Drive folder; you can enter your trips or trip suggestions for the next trip card before you forget what it was you wanted to do, and well ahead of the next deadline. The link is <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18mz-5fAFwspTrTfooWzu6fuaC8u1mGamGiVZOfxVEE/edit?usp=sharing>.

December Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
3 – 4	Blyth Hut (Mt Ruapehu)	Family/Easy/PWP	Helen Peek	021 065 0754
4	Maharahara-Kiritaki-#1 Line	Medium/Fit	Jenny McCarthy	021 215 2197
10 – 11	Tramping from the Lodge	Medium/Fit	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
17 – 18	McKinnon Hut	Fit	Jean Garman	021 176 0209
31 - 2	New Year's Eve at Haurangi Hut (Rimutaka Forest park)	Easy/Medium	Alla Seleznyova	027 308 9583
January Weekend Trips				
14 - 15	Dundas Loop - the hard way	Fit	Jean Garman	021 176 0209
20 - 23	Kawekas Rockas ahead – kiwi mouth loop	Medium/Fit	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
21 - 23	Wellington Walks	Easy/Medium	Alla Seleznyova	027 308 9583
28 - 29	Mangahao Flats Work Party	Medium	Jean Garman	021 176 0209

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.

3rd – 4th December: Blyth Hut (Mt Ruapehu)

Family/Easy/PWP Helen Peek 021 065 0754 or 06 358 9470 vegnz001@gmail.com

Thanks to Pak for the PWP – Photographic Walking Pace grading- love it! A relaxing trip for those wanting to avoid some end-of-year chaos. A nice walk for introducing young-ones to an overnight experience in a hut, and a variety of track conditions. DOC walking time is 1-3 hours. Intention is to leave from the car park up the Ohakune Mountain Road, wander over past the lake and Waitonga Falls then up the goblin track and stream bed for the little grunt up the stairs to the hut. Only about 200 metres elevation all up. It is a 20 bunk serviced hut with a huge verandah facing west where we can relax and watch the sun go down, although as it is so close to Summer Solstice it could rather a late night! Costs: Hut fees at serviced hut rate. Travel: Approx 185 km and 2.5 hours each way so shared travel at 0.08cents/km \$14.80 each way.

Sunday 4th December: Maharahara – Kiritaki - #1 Line

Medium/Fit Jenny McCarthy 021 215 2197 jmccarthy1.nz@gmail.com

At this stage I am planning to do this trip in the order of the title. I have no idea how long it will take but it will be good to do a loop in the lower Ruahines with views to the East and West.

10th – 11th December: Tramping from the Lodge

Medium/Fit Adam Matich 022 358 8062 adam.j.matich@gmail.com

This is going to be a waterfalls trip and so will require good weather for their full appreciation. On Saturday we will take the Round the Mountain Track past Whakapapaiti Hut and walk up the stream to visit the 43m waterfall, then visit the 16m and 30m waterfalls nearby. On Sunday we will drive round to the Mangaturuturu Hut road end and visit the 56m waterfall up-river of the hut. On our way back to the car we may even visit the 30m and 18m falls north of Sunset Ridge.

17th – 18th December: McKinnon Hut

Fit Jean Garman 021 176 0209 trampski.cave@gmail.com

From the twin road bridges, we will be heading up the Hikurangi stream then either popping up onto the spur that comes up to pt 1718 on the range or heading up the spur immediately to the North of this. Once up on the range, it's over Hikurangi and down to McKinnon hut for the night. The next day we will follow the track back to the cableway then the relatively boring 2 hour walk down the Kauwhatau river back to the bridges. Be warned that other trips to find a good route up on to the range from the Hikurangi stream have got there eventually but were not

pleasant experiences so no promises that this way will be any nicer or any promises that we will actually make the hut for the night. Also as walking for several hours down a major river is required to get out river levels and the weather forecast have to be conducive or this trip will not go.

31st December - 2nd January: New Year's Eve at Haurangi Hut (Rimutaka Forest Park)

Easy/Medium **Alla Seleznyova** **027 308 9583**

This is a very tidy locked DOC 10 bunk hut, the hut is booked rather than individual bunks so we will have it all to ourselves. To reach it is a one or three hour walk depending on which route is taken. A lovely place to celebrate the New Year and a chance to spend some time exploring the Rimutaka Forest Park.

14th – 15th January: Dundas Loop the hard way

Fit **Jean Garman** **021 176 0209** trampski.cave@gmail.com

Starting at from the Mangahao dam we will head up the Mangahao valley past Mangahao Flats hut to climb the spur to Triangle Knob then onto Mt Dundas and Dundas hut for the night. If we are a bit shattered the next day we can take the option of dropping down off West peak but if not we can carry on along the range to Ngapuketuru and back down to the dam via Barber Forks. Lots of climbing, reasonably long days.

20th – 23rd January: Kawekas: Rocks ahead – Kiwi Mouth loop

Medium/Fit **Adam Matich** **022 358 8062** adam.j.matich@gmail.com

We will be heading up to stay at Makahu Saddle Hut on Friday night so we have a nice early start on Saturday morning which will entail a nice steep climb up the Makahu Spur to Kaweka J and then a long descent down to Rocks ahead hut, via Back Ridge, for the night. Next day we will splash our way down the Ngaruroro River to Kiwi Mouth Hut, and if we get there early enough will make the climb up to Kiwi Saddle Hut for the night. Next day we will make our way across the tops to Kaweka J and back down to Makahu Saddle. This is going to require some good weather and low flows.

21st – 23rd January: Wellington walks

Easy/Medium **Alla Seleznyova** **027 308 9583** alla.seleznyova@icloud.com

There are a variety of walks in Wellington and its surroundings. Which walks we'll do would depend on the weather and the group's preferences. Please let me know ASAP if you want to come on this trip as we will need to book accommodation early. I suggest bunk/family room(s) in one of the central backpackers (\$30-40 per person per night). Alternative suggestions are welcome. Please let me know ASAP if you are interested. Wellington is a very popular destination especially on this weekend.

<http://wellington.govt.nz/recreation/enjoy-the-outdoors/walks-and-walkways>

28th – 29th January: Mangahao Flats work party

Medium **Jean Garman** **021 176 0209** trampski.cave@gmail.com

This is our annual hut work party. We walk the track in from the Mangahao Dam clearing any debris off the track as we go then give the hut a good clean, gather firewood and take care of any small jobs before relaxing with nibbles and drinkies for the evening. On Sunday we finish off any remaining work then there is the option of returning via the track or taking the river route for all or part of the way out (above Harris Creek this is now a wet short option, below Harris Creek some pack floating is required).

25th – 26th March 2017: Eastwoodhill Arboretum, Gisborne

Easy/Family/PWP **Helen Peek** **021 065 0754 or 06 358 9470** yegnz001@gmail.com

Eastwoodhill Arboretum (situated approximately 35 kms northwest of Gisborne) is the National Arboretum of New Zealand and encompasses over 131 hectares planted in exotic and native trees, shrubs and climber plantings. The collection was planted by Douglas Cook and is regarded as the largest and most comprehensive collection of Northern Hemisphere trees south of the equator. Walks cater for all levels of fitness and ability, from flat tree lined paths to a steep climb up Mt Arateitei which rewards visitors with glorious views of the arboretum and the surrounding countryside. All of them can be covered in a day, so the present plan is roughly walking half on Saturday afternoon and half on Sunday morning. The trip will be about 13 weeks past Summer Solstice so we won't have long hours of daylight but it will be on the cusp of autumn so hopefully some interesting colours.

Accommodation will be at the arboretum and I have tentatively booked us for the bunk rooms. There are two rooms with eight beds in each. There is a fully-equipped shared kitchen and common room facilities. Bed linen is provided and they have offered to supply us a towel each for free. Take our own food/drink.

There is also a studio unit with ensuite (king size bed that converts to two singles if requested) which has a closed-in porch that opens to a large courtyard. Also a twin room that sleeps two in twin bed arrangement. I have not booked these if anyone is interested in them please contact me.

Costs: Accommodation: \$25 per person/per night. Entry: \$10 entry fee per person. Although I am assuming children under 5yrs no charge and Children aged 5- 17yrs \$2. If anyone wants this confirmed please contact me. Travel: Approximately 423 km each way and about 5.5 hours driving. So at shared rate of 0.08 cents per km \$34 each way. More details may be found at the following link: <http://www.eastwoodhill.org.nz/>

Commitment time: Due to the booking of accommodation at Eastwoodhill the last day to confirm coming on the trip and staying at the Eastwoodhill accommodation is **Sunday 15th January, 2017**. Anyone wanting to come and not stay at Eastwoodhill, and are prepared to make their own accommodation arrangements please advise by Monday 20th March.



8th – 9th October: Camping near Makaretu Hut, Ruahine Ranges

Report: Pak Lam Yu

Photos: Pak Lam Yu and Howard Nicholson

For trampers, a day in the hills is a nice day. If one adds a night to it, it will make the day even more special. By 10 am, Howard Nicholson and I arrived at the Ngamoko Road end after passing through Norsewood. Over a farm, we entered the Ruahine Forest Park and the Apiti Track, in the direction towards Makaretu Hut and Leon Kinvig Hut. Soon after we started, we met two hunters coming from the opposite direction. One guy had a red deer carcass on his shoulder. Strong wind was forecast for the day but the track was reasonably well-sheltered. Apart from one or two open places, we were mostly walking through beech forest. After four hours' walk and a lunch break, we arrived at the junction to Makaretu Hut and River. We decided not to push on to the other side of the ridge to Leon Kinvig Hut, which would take another three hours (a lot longer in my case). Given the gale wind forecast, we took the safer option of staying overnight at the Makaretu Hut or camping next to the Makaretu River.



At the track junction



Breezey but fine

The descent from the junction was on well paved ground, which I refer to as the Moss Garden. After about an hour of walking, the track joined the Makaretu River which was the last part of the way to the hut. According to Howard we were still on track, but I was not ready to do the river walk and considering the heavy rain forecast for the night, it might be too challenging to return from the hut the same way tomorrow morning. A decision was made to camp overnight next to the river, which I was very excited about. Although I have camped before, this was my first time camping in New Zealand. A great camp site was found and we pitched Howard's new Macpac alpine tent, which was built to withstand strong wind and rain. He was quick to get his stove going, which used pressurised white spirit fuel. It was an efficient burner and soon we enjoyed a well-earned hot cup of tea. When I heard what Howard had brought for dinner, I could not wait to see that. Right on time at 6 pm, Howard made one of the best camping meals that I have ever experienced. It was very colourful and tasty: spiral pasta, Heller's Spicy Biersticks, fresh veges, tomato paste and Maggi Devilled Sausages sauce.



Pak gets his feet in the water



Howie at the campsite

We were well-sheltered from the elements up until bedtime. During the night, I could hear the wind picking up. It was like lying in the dark in a 3D cinema. You could hear the roaring wind coming from a distance towards you; it shifted to the left, from behind you, then swirled around and hit you from the right. That was what I called genuine surround sound! A shower of rain hit the tent during the night but this turned into a downpour at about six o'clock. Somehow Howard managed to get the stove going in that testing condition and we had hot tea, hot milk and muesli (breakfast in bed, in the middle of a forest).

For some miraculous reason, the rain started to ease off while we packed up and took the tent down. The rain stopped when we began the uphill ascent, through the Moss Garden to join the Apiti Track. After I took a nice shot of the rainbow and the ranges, we returned to the road end the way we came in. The weather was much better than we anticipated. On the way out, Howard helped clear the track from large fallen branches and a dead possum. All in all, it was a wonderful trip and a memorable one for me. I thank Howard for the meticulous preparation for the trip and his tolerance of my photographic walking pace.

(Note: Photographic walking pace has flexible hours per day and at a pace that allows you to take in the scenery and check out the flora and fauna.)

Note 2: This trip replaced the planned Makaroro medium-fit trip, due to a poor weather forecast.

Wednesday 12th October: WWWs enjoy the Carrington Loop and Atiwhakatu Hut track

Report: Maurice and Bob

Photos: William and Maureen



At Rest

27 eager trampers assembled at 9.30am, in the Mount Holdsworth car park ready to traverse the Carrington Loop, Atiwhakatu Track, or a partial combination of them. Before setting out, a timely and well-received reminder was given to us all by one very experienced member of the group prompted by an incident on a MTSC tramp the previous week. She spoke of the necessity to be well-prepared for changeable weather and other eventualities when tramping. Her advice to keep in groups and maintain contact, was definitely adhered to by the 15 who made their way around the Carrington Loop and the 8 who walked part of the loop to then retrace their steps down to add the Donnelly Flat Loop Walk on a bird spotting mission. Four trampers also walked all or part of the track to the Atiwhakatu Hut. For the full Carrington Loopers, the impending rain held off and the strong breeze higher up the loop was reduced by the bush especially in the downhill search for the track. Once on the well-formed track (to other regions) a tentative stop at the exposed Rocky Point was in contrast to the earlier shelter from the bush. As the groups emerged from their various tracks, the fine wind-blown rain picked up so we were glad of the public

shelter at the car park. All trampers were counted out soon after 3pm. An excellent day for all in the Holdsworth Bush which was at its best with spring-like temperatures for at least some of the day. Thanks to trip leader Maurice, to Bev for her timely pep talk, and to our drivers.



Not the standard DOC signage

Wednesday 19th October: WWWs Tramp the Atene Skyline Track

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos & Plots: Evan and Bob

On Wednesday 19th October, 27 Wednesday trampers gathered for a 7.30am start, with one trampler who was roused to join us from his anticipated 8am start. We travelled in convoy with extra vehicles mustered because the van had not been returned from repairs. We took the back roads via Fordell to avoid Whanganui and to pick up the River Road.

After about twenty minutes travel along River Road, in conditions of intermittent light drizzle, we found it doubly closed, first by a road works crew repairing a big wash-out and later by a logging crew who were using a drag line to harvest pre-felled timber from a very steep slope above the road. The trip leader had made it through ahead of us and the scheduled road closures. Suggestions of six packs to lubricate the road opening were replaced by a commitment to give the friendly road man a pig from the track if we got one, this being unlikely as nobody had a rifle and there was also a ban on hunting in place! After a wait of about 30 minutes, timber recovery was halted and we were let through but with the caution that the road would be closed until 4.30pm.



Waiting to get through the Road Closure



Waiting to get through the Road Closure

So after an unpromising start to the tramp, at 9.50am 28 trampers set off up the zigzag track at the up-river side, then across a major slip that we concluded had been the reason for the recent extended track closure. Gaining about 260m in 2.5 km, the track then picks up an old softly graded road for about 3.5 km. The old road is grassed but has been churned up by cattle and horses. The track then follows the ridge line to a clearing where there is a campsite, a shelter, a water supply and a long drop. Most of us ate lunch at the shelter around 1pm. The shelter was the maximum reach for those doing the tramp as an in/out.

As the day went on the weather improved until by 3pm we were enjoying sunlight and the spectacular and ever-changing views of the Puketapu hill looking inwards and across the tops towards the coast and up the river. On this side of the loop there was evidence of foraging goats.

This is a demanding but rewarding tramp classed by DOC as advanced tramping, with a suggested time of 6 to 8 hours. In the event, 20 made it all the way. The last group home took 7 hours and Dennis, the fastest individual, a mere 4 hours ... but with no lunch stop. There was debate as to what was the best direction to travel the loop, with the consensus in favour of the direction we chose on the day, since the final descent of 450m in 1.6km would have made a very challenging start as a climb.

Thanks to trip leader Marion, our drivers especially those who volunteered at short notice, and to the road men/foresters who opened the road for us.

Wednesday 26th October: WWWs do a Coppermine tramp but not as we have known It!

Report: Chris and Bob

Photos: Maureen, William and Lynda

18 bears opted for the advertised "medium loop" up Coppermine on what started out as an unexpectedly fine morning. But as the day progressed, both the weather deteriorated and the meaning of medium became clear as a relative term only.

Setting off from the car park at 9am, good progress was made up the spur from the Coppermine camp to the point known as the Pretender (height 967) on old maps. Unanimous opinion was that it was a steep climb in need of some remedial work in a couple of places though nobody mentioned a chairlift. Lunch was had at midday and by unanimous opinion it was decided we would head north to point 1015 rather than going back down the way we had come up.



Fronds in the Clouds



Dressed in Leather?



Upwards Ever Upwards!

The weather began to change shortly after lunch and we were glad of the protection offered by the leatherwood. By the time that point 1015 was reached some 2 hours later, it was completely clagged in and the intermittent rain was near horizontal. Tiredness was clearly evident and even the brief thunder, lightning and hail shower seemed insufficient to raise spirits. So it was off down the long spur to the farmland, with 18 pairs of boots doing a thorough job of churning up the track. And the rain got heavier and more persistent as the afternoon progressed.



Happy Long Loop trampers (at Lunch)



Happy Short Loop Trampers

Eventually, after 7 hours, we all got out to the car park safely and we were pleased to see those who had done the short loop (although some of us were disappointed to find that somebody had eaten all the porridge!). Those waiting were reassured when a text message was received from Evan above (!) confirming that the emergence of the

group would be delayed. This tramp, again, reinforced the need to be prepared for adverse weather changes, to carry extra food and water and to have a full change of clothes available on emergence.

Congratulations from Trip Leader to those who persevered and made it around. (William's app clocked the tramp at 5100 calories expended!)

Meanwhile 9 bears opted for the advertised short loop with its steep 400m+ ascent and descent. We found the track up and along freshly cut by a DOC team of four. The team leader proved to be the long serving DOC staff member from the Ongaonga Base now under consideration for closure so a sympathetic conversation took place (MTSC has made a submission on the consequences of the proposed closure.)

The group needed to don rain gear for about 40 minutes around lunch time which was enjoyed at the start of the track down the fence-line to the poled route down across the farm land. The group arrived back to the car park by 1.20pm for what proved to be a long wait in cooling conditions and intermittent heavy rain. All of this party emerged safely except for one tramper returning after injury and a long absence who sadly slipped on the last stream crossing. Thanks to our drivers including Chris B who drove the van.

21st - 25th October: Around the Cobb Valley on the Lockett and Peel Ranges

Report: Adam Matich

Photos: Howard Nicholson and Jean Garman

The 8am ferry saw us exiting Picton a bit before mid-day after a shameless spend-up at the bakery. After almost 4 hours of travel we drove across the wall of the Cobb Dam and parked up at the Sylvester Lakes Track car park. We only had 90 mins tramp along this 4WD track up to Sylvester Hut for our first night. There were a couple of skiffs of hail, but not enough to warrant rain coats. Sylvester Hut is very clean and tidy, has a resident Weka, a good wood burner and lots of firewood, and we were the only people there. So it was a comfortable night.

On Saturday morning we headed off early on the 4WD track to the Sylvester Lakes, and then off-track to Iron Lake. This is all very gentle country for wandering across and there are lots of lakes to explore and camp by. Lake Sylvester is slightly artificial, the outfall having been dammed to raise the lake level by ten feet or so. In the past Little Lake Sylvester had also been dammed and then the wall dug out again to let it flow into Lake Sylvester. This latter does not really agree with what is shown on the map. From the outfall of Iron Lake we followed the cairns up to Iron Hill, a safe and pretty easy route. We did have a bit of old snow to kick steps in though. Looking back from 1631 we watched two commercial helicopters landing behind us on Iron Hill. A wedding perhaps? Travel along the Lockett Range was simple, there being nothing difficult and lots of great views of the surrounding peaks. There were also more lakes than an angry old man could shake a stick at. Mt Benson looked nasty from a distance, and it was very rocky, but up close it was all okay to climb over. The only spot we had to sidle was around 1503 and the two high points just before it; on the face on the Cobb Valley side, which had a trail and cairns. The whole range was cairned, which was comforting. Climbing back onto the ridge after 1503 looked nasty, but again it was straight forward. Before 1390 there were a couple of sections of forest with trails going through them. These trails divert around a couple of little bluffs. Everything after that was brain-in-neutral and we made our way down to Fenella Hut after a nine hour day of not travelling very fast. Fenella Hut did fill up a bit that night, so it wasn't as good a sleep as the night before.



Looking down into the Cobb Valley



A lovely section of the Lockett Range

Sunday required another early rise, as we did not know what the day would bring, apart from more sun. We dropped to Cobb hut, climbed to Cobb Lake and Round Lake, and then climbed SW up onto the Peel Range. Mt Cobb looked uninviting, with its rocky spine, but we went up over it with reasonable aplomb; although with disconcertingly good views down to Lake Henderson. Most of the way through to Mt Ranolf was across the tops apart from a harmless sidle around 1623. It was around 3 p.m. by the time we started up Mt Ranolf and we were tiring. It took us 2 hours to go up and over Ranolf to our campsite by the tarn to the East of it (10 hour day). Mt Ranolf was a bit awkward. On a descent down through some rocks, on top, we had to take our packs off and clamber down, and then the descent to the tarn also got a bit rocky and messy, requiring us to sidle across the face

on the Cobb Valley side. It wasn't too difficult, just slow. There was quite good camping by the tarn. There were also some goats in case we were running short of food.



On top of Mt Cobb



Camping by the tarn on the Peel Range

Monday was yet another rain-free day and the wind still hadn't picked up; just a cold breeze. We romped across 1525, past a big rocky outcrop, up and over a rock slab, and then things got difficult. Staying on the ridge was not tenable as it required climbing up a rock face that was not safe; the rock was rotten and loose. So at the little saddle just below 1500 m we dropped south and sidled around down to ca 1400 m to climb up into the saddle after 1639. The face we sidled was shingle, tussock and snow-grass, the latter two being a bit slippery even though it was dry. We would not have been able to travel this range in the wet; it would have been too dangerous. The travel on this section was very slow as we had to pay attention to our balance and footing. Jean had forbidden us embarrassing her by having an accident. The rest of the sidles we did that day were on the Cobb Valley side of the peaks; viz the little peak after 1639, 1617, and the final one of the day around 1544. Some of these sidles were on steep faces with considerable care needed. Even the sidle on a rock face, with excellent footing, was traumatic because what was below was very unforgiving. This trip was tiring, not so much from the physical effort, but from the concentration needed to avoid the services of a rescue helicopter....and maybe an undertaker.

The last sidle before safety was anti-climatic; it was a long safe sidle from after the unlabelled high point (ca 1560, BP23 630 481) to the little saddle after 1544. What preceded that sidle was an attempt to go over the top which was a mine-field of rock spires and fallen boulders that made the more sensible members of the party even more nervous than they already were. Initially, a sidle was attempted on the western side, but when the goats (there were a lot of goats) ahead of Jean started milling around nervously and not running away she worked out that there might be bluffs ahead. Once we reached our safe saddle just after 1544 we had a celebratory late lunch after having taken 6 hours to travel 4 km. The rest of the day involved much faster, safer and happier travel. After passing Mt Mytton we were closely inspected by a large *vandal* of Kea, but were unscathed. The last obstacle was a steep shingly climb up onto the flat topped Mt Peel after which we romped down to Balloon Hut for the night (9 hour day). It was all ours and it had a new fire with lots of firewood thanks to the Motueka and Waimea tramping Clubs.



Leaving Balloon Hut



Heading towards Lake Peel

That night the rain and wind finally arrived, but by Tuesday morning it had faded and we only needed our raincoats on briefly as we took a leisurely 4½ hours to get back to the car via Lake Peel and the ridge track that parallels the reservoir back to the Cobb Dam Road. Although we cheated a bit and dropped from the track through a patch of forest down to the road to save ourselves a couple of kilometres of road walking. We were Howard Nicholson, Jean Garman, and Adam Matich

29th – 30th October: Waikamaka Hut

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: Jean Garman



Heading up to Waipawa Saddle on Saturday and heading back down on Sunday

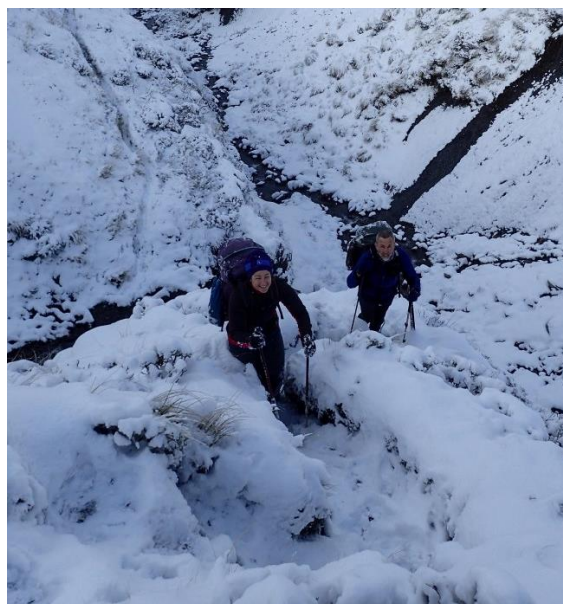


Heading down into the Waikamaka on Saturday and back up out on Sunday

As we walked up the Waipawa River it rained; not heavily, not consistently but reasonably continuously forcing us to seek out the shelter of Waipawa Forks hut for morning tea. Around lunchtime it conveniently stopped and stayed away for the final climb up and over the saddle, but before we reached Waikamaka hut the hail started. The hail and rain showers continued while we spent the rest of the afternoon getting the hut nice and warm, eating assorted nibbles, sipping wine, reading and doing crosswords and assorted embroideries. A yummy dinner was followed by a relatively early night. Adam found it to be snowing when he ventured outside around 10.30pm. After a good long sleep we were all awake at first light which these days is a little before 6am. It was still lightly snowing! About 10cm of soft fluffy snow had fallen and with no wind it had coated everything – absolutely stunning. The snow soon stopped and the clouds were breaking up with patches of blue sky becoming visible as we rugged up well for a very beautiful but somewhat chilly climb back to the saddle. At the saddle we finally got into the warmth of the sunshine to warm fingers and toes but then got pretty coated in snow as we descended through the scrubby vegetation into the Waipawa river. The snow had fallen down to around 800m but was rapidly melting under the onslaught of sunshine. A relatively quick trip out saw us back to the car by lunchtime. We were Jenny, Bernadette, Adam and Jean.



Ready to leave Waikamaka hut



Cold but still smiling

Wednesday 2nd November: WWWs on the Waiohine River Track (long lost shoe found)

Report: Bob and Denise

Photos: William, Maureen and Evan

26 Wednesday Wilderness Trampers rendezvoused in Carterton to drive in on the Waiohine Gorge Road for a 9.50am start. Groups of 8 crossed the swing bridge to the junction between the Totara Flats track and the track to Cone Hut. All safely turned right then to tramp in mild conditions of persistent drizzle along the riverside sidle track. This is a very picturesque tramp (see photos), the river and its many tributaries provide many beautiful views as the track sidles up and down up to a maximum of 65m from near river level with a succession of swing bridges across the major tributaries. As the day wore on, river levels rose and the river coloured up. This is a relatively easy track but slow going due to the proliferation of tree roots to cross and boulders to clamber over.

Five keen trampers were an estimated half an hour from the Totara Flats Hut when they turned. The exception was Chris T-S being the only WWW to reach the hut. He was a man on a mission! He recovered a shoe that he had left behind in the hut ten months previously.



Raincoats were the order of the day

The rest of us enjoyed a very picturesque and relatively easy tramp starting in drizzle but finishing in beautiful sunshine where it was stated that we needed a 'shower of rain' to get everyone back in the vehicles and out of the warm sunshine. We then drove in convoy to the Carterton Bakery where we enjoyed a warm welcome, good coffee and excellent cakes.

Thanks to the drivers of the day -- Chris B, Bob Ho, Evan D, Marion B. Another good turnout of WWW's with 26 in total with 5 coming from Fielding. For various reasons there were 5 last minute cancellations.

Thursday 3rd November: Back to Hinerua hut after five years

Report: Royce Mills

Photos: Royce Mills and John Brock

Our Thursday tramping group (twenty-three of us) set off from a farm airstrip. Permission had been obtained from two farmers to cross their property. It was a steep walk to start with, up a zig-zag 4WD track through scrub. A high

locked gate in a deer fence had to be climbed over, but this group of mostly gold-card holders proved they were nimble enough to deal with this obstacle.

Upon reaching the bush edge a morning tea stop was taken, followed by an easy stroll along the ridge to Hinerua hut. The track must have been cut and widened fairly recently as it was “a walk in a park”; mossy underfoot with beautiful forest around us. We cleared the track of quite a lot of light windfall branches from winter’s wind and snow. It felt like our group was the first along here for quite a while. Just two hours to the hut where we sat outside and enjoyed our lunch stop. The bright orange hut was looking in splendid condition. The bunks have new timber and everything inside was very tidy.



Thirty minutes to Hinerua hut



Lunch at Hinerua hut



Windy on the tussock tops

Most of the group decided to head higher up to the tussock tops. It’s a steep and narrow ridge track, but with more lovely bush and views as well. After 30 minutes we reached the open tussock. Although it was a fine and sunny day we were hit by extremely strong winds. A few hardy ones who managed to stand up and walk in these conditions put their raincoats on and headed higher still. At 1pm we all started returning downhill. We took our time, again enjoying the surroundings and the views below that opened up once we left the bush. We were back to the van at 3.15pm. A good day out enjoyed by all. It surely won’t be five years before we are back here again.

5th – 6th November: Top Maropea Hut

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photos: Helen Peek

As Ken drove us along Whakarara Road, the weather was good down below, but cloudy and drizzly looking in the Ruahines ahead. We left the car just after 10am, and called into TripleX Hut to admire the new woodstove. The hut looked very clean and tidy inside.

We had a relaxed ascent with plenty of photo opportunities and stops. At one of these stops I sat down on a nice patch of dirt and moss, and the others informed me when I got up that there was now a large rip in the back of my (old) shorts. With the action of walking, this enlarged, and when we got to the Forest & Bird seat, Ken kindly repaired it with some emergency duct tape that he keeps around one of his poles.

Before Shuteye Shack we were up in the drizzle, and it was coats on, only to find that the rain would stop, and overheating peoples would take their coats off, only for it to start raining again. We got to Sunrise Hut for a late lunch. Few were at the hut, the woodstove was working hard, and a little girl (who had set off with her dad when we did) stared at us with wide-eyed wonder as we bustled about boiling water and feeding ourselves.

More wet people arrived at Sunrise Hut as we were leaving at about 2.45pm. I had already checked the weather over the back of the hut, and it was windy, but not too bad. There would be no trouble staying upright.

We had a drizzly but enjoyable walk to Armstrong Saddle, but the wind was quite strong at the saddle, and I crouched in the tussock by Hamish Armstrong’s information board while everyone arrived. There followed a boggy climb up to the top, and when travelling along the top the wind became a bit of a problem for the first time that day. I was glad when we started descending. This descent to Top Maropea Hut has really interesting views, with amazing rock pillars. The last bit down through the bush was steep and slippery. Much care was needed, and my ankle and I were very pleased to arrive at the hut at about 4.15pm.

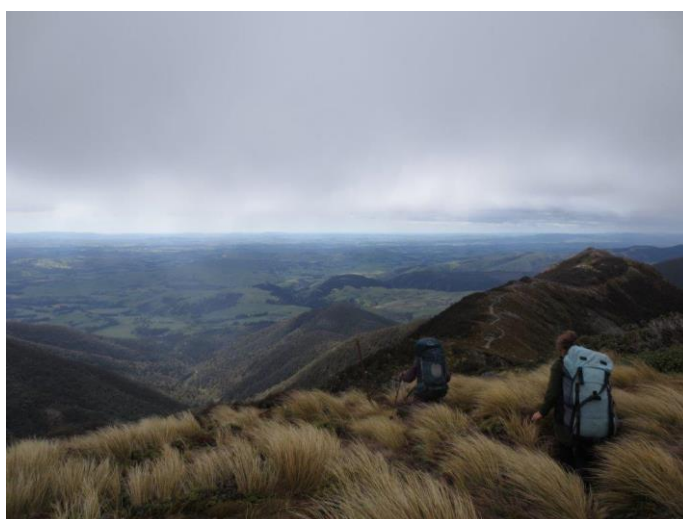


Tramping over the rugged windswept tops between Sunrise and Top Maropea

It was quite a shock to see the flat, muddy surrounds of the hut. The last time I'd been here, about 2 years ago, it had been very grassy. I hope the grass grows again. No one felt like camping out among the mud and rocks, in the cold and rain, so all 5 of us crammed into the 4 bunk hut. Linda kindly offered to sleep on the floor. Ken got the fire going and it was a lovely, cosy set up, even though we kept bumping into each other. The open fire was lovely. Due to lack of space on the little stainless steel table, Ken had to cook down by the fire. At about 7pm it rained harder for a time, and we were all in bed by 8.30pm. All night there was the cool noise of the wind "whoomphing" over the top of the chimney, and every time my top bunkmate moved, the bunks shook as in a small earthquake. Still, it was pretty quiet, and I slept on and off. At times the wind shook the hut, and I was thinking it would be very windy between Armstrong Saddle and Sunrise Hut on the way out.



Ready to leave Top Maropea hut



A windy day on the way home too

Though not raining in the morning, it was a soggy climb to the top, and still cloudy. It was indeed much windier than yesterday, and it was an exciting walk to Armstrong Saddle, with the very strong Westerly. It was like being sandblasted, but with drizzle instead of sand. I just kept my head down, and kept going and we all arrived safely at Armstrong Saddle.

The next bit to Sunrise Hut was *really* windy. Luckily no-one had to resort to hands and knees, but I got blown over once, and some more than that. I got to Sunrise Hut feeling a bit dizzy, and pointed out that I found the wind *discombobulating*. Everyone liked that word. For morning tea we got out the stoves and brewed up as yesterday.

As always in a Westerly, as soon as we started descending from Sunrise, we were in the shelter. Luckily it wasn't hurried, as descents are still a little hard for my ankle and weak right leg, and Mary had a sore knee. We were out by lunchtime, and had a lovely late lunch at the Ongaonga café. Many thanks to everyone for their enjoyable company, and extra thanks to Ken for all the driving.

We were: Linda Campbell (trip leader), Helen Peek, Ken and Mary Mercer, Nicola Wallace.

Wednesday 9th November: WWWs Tramp to an Elusive Burn Hut

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Maureen Naylor

At 9.35am 21 Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers assembled at the Mangahao No 2 dam to be briefed before making their way across the dam at 320m and then onto the sidle track along the river bank. The party included Kamil from

the Czech Republic who joined us for a taste of "real" Kiwi tramping. It was a dull, overcast day with low clouds and an unfulfilled forecast of sunshine later. The river track has a justified reputation for its demanding roughness and unforgiving nature with lots of tight scrambles over and around roots along with steep drops over boulders. It is typical of the less frequently tramped Tararua tracks and certainly not candidate for designation as a front country "Great Walk".

Seven of the faster trampers including Kamil, made it along the river, up the steep climb through the leatherwood and then through the tussock to the Hut at 752m. We have to take their word for this because the clouds were low and visibility limited to about 30m; those who turned early never even saw the hut! On the way out some found extra focus after the sight of dribbles of blood deposited on the edge of an early climb down to a stream crossing.

All were, more or less, safely out by about 3.30pm in grey damp conditions making coffee taken at the Horseman Cafe a joyful event. The consensus was that this is a tramp to be repeated sometime in summer conditions.

Thanks to trip leader Bob and our heroic drivers Chris, Anne, Marion and Rod.



The No 2 Mangahao Dam



Picturesque streamway



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New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Secunder 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.