

South Wairarapa Tramping Club

Newsletter for February 2025

www.swtc.org.nz

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Club night:

There will be no meeting in February, unless anyone would like to host a pot luck dinner.

The next meeting will be Tuesday 11 March. At the AGM the option of having meetings every two months will be discussed.

Supper: (tea towel, milk and biscuits)

Supper box is kept in the store cupboard at Studio 73

For the March meeting the roster is: Barry Kempton

Trip List

2025

Date	Destination	Trip coordinator	Phone	Fitness
2 Feb #	Taputeranga snorkel trail with MTC	John Rhodes	304 9095	M
8.2	Wellington walk	Ian & Rosie Montgomerie	021 2037 4092	
15.2	Wairarapa south coast	Ross Anderson	021 597 777	
22.2	Carterton back roads cycling	Chris Leather	021 230 8591	
1.3	Winzenberg Hill track work	John Rhodes	304 9095	

Sunday

If you wish to go on a trip, please let the organiser know by the Thursday prior.

Trip Gradings

The letters are an indication of how tough it will be.

E **Easy.** Completely flat, no hills, 2 – 3 hours.

M **Moderate fitness.** Some hills, well formed tracks. 4-6 hours walk per day.

F **More fitness.** Steep hills, challenging tracks. May go off tracks. 6 – 8 hours walk per day.

Leaders: Please remember if you are unable to lead your trip it is your responsibility to find a replacement leader / trip.

Trip Reports

CHIMNEY ROCK 23 NOVEMBER 2024

There were four of us plus a dog on this trip which took four hours. A real grunt up to the ridge but relatively straightforward going along the ridge and down the pylon road back to the cars. Weather conditions were very still and cloudy but no rain.

Above Chimney Rock it was misty so no views from the ridge





TAUANUI HUT 7 DECEMBER 2024

We left for the Pirinoa entrance to the hut track at around 8.30. After traveling about 5km down the Whakatotomo gravel road, and then several kilometres down the Aorangi forestry 'rocky' road to a suitable parking place, we set out on foot at 9.45.

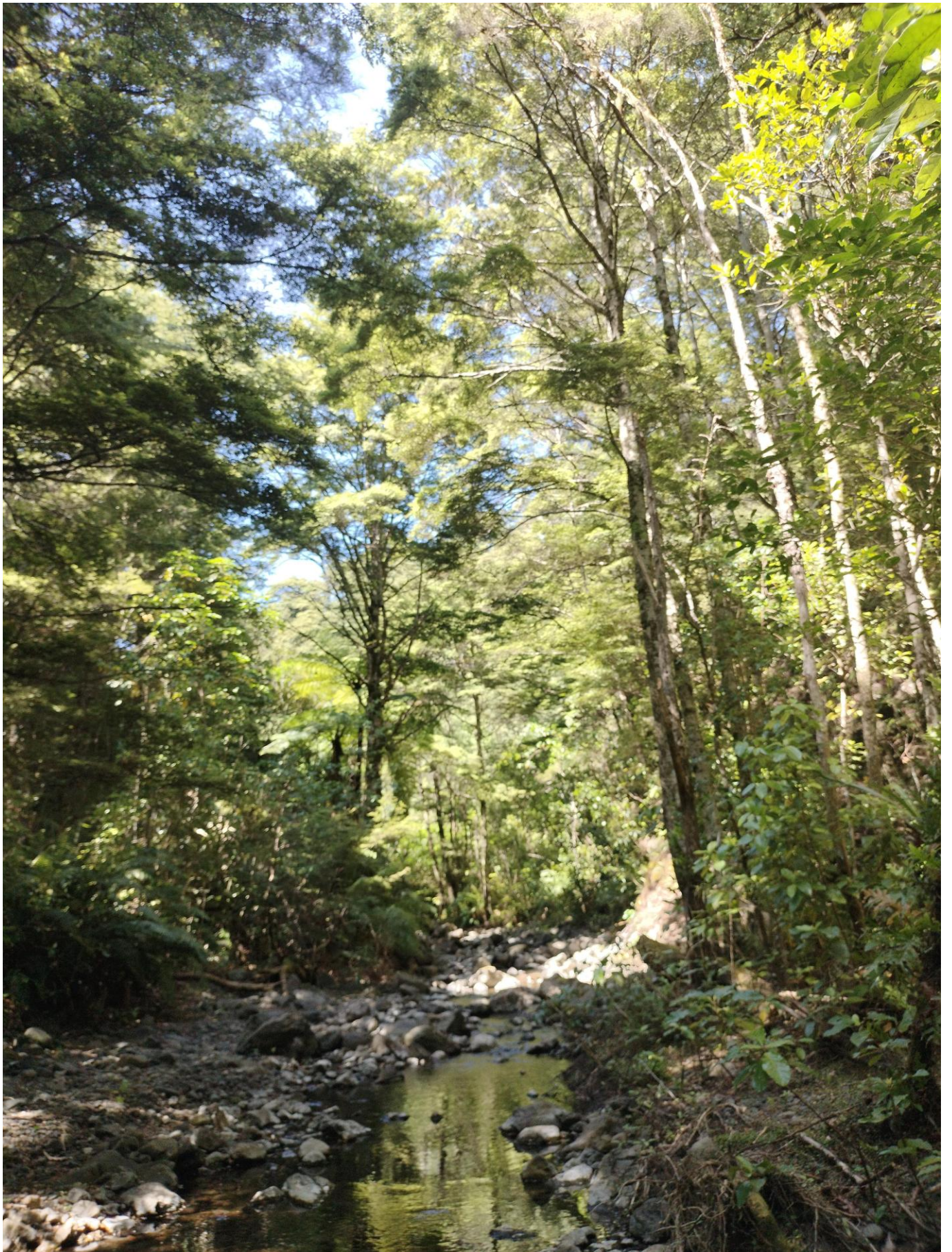
The weather was dry and very warm, the road had a large amount of pest bait stations, and the surrounding slopes showed evidence of significant slips historically. With the welcome assistance of Barry's map app, we were able to pinpoint the exit off that road to the hut track's beginning.

The way to the Tauanui hut is a mixture of occasional river crossings with patches of some forest shaded track, and other exposed river bed areas. The water level of the Tauanui was only about ankle deep on the day, and the plentiful birdsong that accompanied our hike made for a pleasant, incident-free journey. Arrival at the six berth hut was around midday- two hunting parties were in residence at the time of lunch.

The return journey commenced around 12.45: there were several minor incidents featuring the trip co-ordinator on the way back - a brush on the track with some ongaonga, and an overly friendly dragonfly. No local flora or fauna was harmed to our knowledge...

We returned to the vehicle about 2.20pm, a most enjoyable walk had by all. Many thanks to the club members, Ian Montgomerie, Barry Kempton, John Wilson, Stefan van Trigt.







WHAKATURAKAU HUT SAT 14 DECEMBER 2024

Being extremely nervous about returning to a leadership role with SWTC Clive set up an answering service to field the multitude of potential incoming enquiries about this trip. As fate would have it however he only had one starter, that being the well travelled Ross Anderson, fresh from a recent trip to South America. The main difference I think would be that Ross's guide for this trip came with far less hassles. Managing to get away from Carterton just after 8 we were on the track around 8.30 am and arrived at the hut a bit under 2 hours later for a quick lunch and turn around. It took a similar time to return and we were surprised by the lack of people on the track... must be something to do with impending Christmas festivities ?

Thanks for your company, Ross
Clive Baxter (leader and scribe)



PUKAHA / MT BRUCE, 30 NOVEMBER 2024

A combined MTC and SWTC walk

Having only five people, we walked up from the Mauriceville side and returned the same way instead of crossing with a car key swap.

Light rain fell as we drove up Mt Munro Road, and the upper slopes of Pukaha were in cloud.

Having been warned that the track is not maintained, we took loppers, secateurs and a saw. Marker poles on the farm land still stand but have lost their white paint.

After entering the scenic reserve, we were immediately at work clearing blackberry and bracken.

However, the track then entered rewarewa-dominated forest and was for the most part clear, except in a few open places where we cut back Himalayan honeysuckle and other light growth.

The day was pleasantly cool, with a light southerly. We lunched in an open area at just over 600 metres, a kilometre from the top and 100 metres below it. Being there and watching the cloud slowly lift off the Tararuas was a good reason to be alive—and in a tramping club.

Pictures are at <https://swtc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024.11.30-Pukaha-Mt-Bruce.pdf>

Nigel Boniface, Liz Frater, Ian Montgomerie, Josh Oakley and John Rhodes

BUTCHER TRACK–CATTLE RIDGE CIRCUIT, 21 DECEMBER 2024

A combined MTC and SWTC walk

The forecast was dodgy—some rain for Saturday, less for Sunday and none for Monday. Of the seven interested trampers, four were free on Monday, while five were available on Saturday and six could make it on Saturday.

On Saturday, a long drive brought us to the Catchpool road end south of Wainuiomata. The day was cloudy and not too hot. We walked up the Butcher Track and glimpsed a bit of Te Whanganui-a-Tara, then made the long descent of Cattle Ridge to the Orongorongo Track, by which we returned.

Three and a half hours is the recommended time for this circuit. We took six. Much longer and we'd have been caught in the downpour that pelted our cars as we descended into the Hutt Valley.

Nigel Boniface, Helen Cox, Ian Montgomerie, Hilary Ryan, Josh Oakley and John Rhodes (coordinator)

Pictures are at <https://swtc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2024.12.21-Remutaka-Forest-Park-1.pdf>

HUTT VALLEY RIVER WALK SATURDAY 11 JANUARY

We drove through misty rain over the Rimutaka Hill and through Upper Hutt, dropped cars at Totara Park bridge, and by the time we reached Moonshine Park the sun was shining.

After crossing Moonshine bridge, a short flight of steps took us down to the river track, and we headed upstream, through attractive bush, till we reached an open grassy area with good views of the Eastern Hutt Valley. After admiring the view, and removing layers of clothing, we crossed Kirton Drive and climbed up through a thick bushy area and over a hill, where we had morning tea at the entrance to Riverstone Bush. This was an extensive bush area leading uphill beside a deep stream bed. What would it be like after heavy rain, we wondered.

We returned to the river track via roads and more bush, and shortly had a view from above of the new bridge, gracefully curving over the Whakakitei River. We crossed the bridge, and had lunch on the grass beside it. No one felt impelled to take a dip in the deep pool under the bridge.

After a 4 km walk up beside or near the river, we arrived at our cars at Totara Park. The team were very satisfied with their 3 1/2 hour approximately 8.8km walk through a completely new area.

Those on the trip were: Ross Anderson, Lesley Callaghan, Liz and Geoff Crowe, Ruth and Peter Graham, Barry Kempton, Jane and Victor Lenting, Ian Montgomerie, Jen Pomeroy, and Ed and Juliet Cooke, leaders.





HEREPAI HUT JANUARY 18 2025

By Friday evening I had eight trampers on my list for the next day's trip to Herepai Hut in the Northern Tararuas. The starting point was Putara road end car park. As we had an hour and a quarter's drive we left Greytown at 8am, early for us these days. One of my team had dropped out before we left. On arriving at Putara road end the car park was crowded, luckily two spots were left for us. Also at the car park were a number of younger people setting off on their Duke of Edinburgh trek toward Roaring Stag Lodge.

Our team of seven plus dog Sioux set off up the track, crossed the swing bridge then off up the track on the true left bank of the Mangatinoka River. Shortly afterwards two members of our team retreated to their car as one tramper's knee was giving trouble.

After half an hour we crossed another swing bridge then straight up. This was really hard going for about an hour, then with great sighs of relief we reached the junction at the ridge top, Roaring Stag left, Herepai about thirty minutes to the right.

Our party of five reached Herepai at lunchtime. What a great hut, recently refurbished by members of the Backcountry Trust. The effort these guys put into restoring huts is really appreciated by trampers, especially the SWTC members who visited Herepai

After a relaxing lunch stop and a short climb up the track for a better view of the surrounding area we set off back meeting quite a few trampers heading toward Roaring Stag. That hut would have been crowded that night.

A great trip, quite strenuous. Trampers were Ian Montgomerie, Stephan Van Trig, John Wilson, Bruce Farley, Ruth and Peter Graham, Barry Kempton (leader) and dog Sioux.





KĀKAHI MONITORING, SATURDAY 25 JANUARY

A small combined SWTC / MTC contingent biked down to the lake to join this community event, hosted by Greater Wellington Regional Council's Wairarapa Moana Restoration Project.



In groups of three or four, we went to our allocated 50 metre zones of lake shore. At the sound of a car horn we began our half hour search, paddling in warm shallow water on a perfectly calm, sunny morning. Our instructions were to collect as many kākahi (*Echyridella*, fresh water mussel) as we could in half an hour, or to stop at 50. Our group reached that total just within the time limit. We then took the animals to the shore, where we measured and recorded their lengths and their degree of shell erosion before returning them to the lake. Most of our kākahi appeared to be adults (they live for up to 50 years) with only one or two juveniles. All were of the commonest species, *E. menziesii*.



This annual event is a wonderful way to connect with the lake, a significant part of the environment in which we and kākahi live, and to share it with others. The organisers provided a barbecue and drinks afterwards.

An unexpected bonus was to find a deep carpet of the beautiful fresh aquatic liverwort *Riccia* along the shore.



John Rhodes