Castle Rock, Kaimanawa Forest Park

WILD FILE
Access Car park on Desert Road, south of Turangi and opposite the Tukino Ski Field access road
Grade Easy
Time 5hr return
Distance 5.81km to Castle Rock
Total ascent 571m
Map BJ35

Description
One of the best views of the Ruapehu massif is from Castle Rock, a fortress-like outcrop along the Kaimanawa Forest Park Walkway.
The name is quite likely locally bestowed as it is not marked on a map. However, finding Castle Rock is relatively easy.
A 4WD track heading north-east leads up to a poled route branching off to the right, then beginning a short but steady climb in a south-easterly direction to the hinterland.
From here it's just a case of following this undulating route which parallels the park's boundary with land occupied by the New Zealand Defence Force.
After a few brief spurts of ascent, you'll reach the open expanse of rolling tussock grasslands, giving opportunity for many stops to look back and admire the spectacular view of Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe in the distance. The higher the track climbs, the better the scene.
After a short sharp ascent through a remnant of beech forest, the track emerges onto flattish tussock land with a few peat bog areas and the destination just 20 minutes away.
At 1450m, the rock formation, geologically of a metamorphic schist composition dating back possibly 175 million years and once lying on the ocean floor, makes for an excellent lunch spot with grand 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside.

Elevation Profile

Castle Rock, Kaimana Foest Park

1526

1300

1300

1313

1300

1200

1400

Kaimanawa

Forest

Pa

1396

1404

1400

Butts

1300

Stream

1200

1301

1356

Waipahihi

1200

1200

1166

1321

1366

1203

1044

1339

1346

1114

1300

1100

1200

1261

Hut Stream

1152

1200

1100

Tutangata

1066

Mangaio

1074

1114

1082

1