

Lower Matakuhia Hut via Upper Matakuhia Hut, Waipunga Forest

WILD FILE

Access Pine Milling Road from the Napier-Taupo Highway or from Minginui via South and Boundary roads

Grade Moderate

Distance 13.7km

Ascent 644m

Time Road end to Upper Matakuhia Hut (eight bunks), 2.5hr; Upper Matakuhia Hut to Lower Matakuhia Hut (six bunks), 7.5-8hr

Map BH38

Description

According to DOC, the track from Upper Matakuhia Hut to Lower Matakuhia Hut isn't worth attempting. Wilderness begs to differ.

You can begin the track on Pine Milling Road, off the Napier-Taupo Highway, which is quicker and more efficient, or do as this trips suggests and come from Minginui via South and Boundary roads.

The track starts at the site of the defunct (and now non-existent) Matakuhia Saddle Hut, and wiggles its way easily down a hill and along the Matakuhia Stream. Cross a large log bridge, weave through loads of toi toi and womble along for 2.5hr to Upper Matakuhia Hut.

A hunter named Ron is often in residence having been coming into Upper Matakuhia since his childhood. He does loads of maintenance on it and the track, as well as progressively cleaning up the track to Lower Matakuhia Hut. Ron makes the trip in every two weeks to check on the place, have some quiet time and service the pest traps. Time your trip right and you might get to say hello.

For the first 45 minutes from Upper Matakuhia Hut, the going is easy. Cross the stream with a waterfall on your left and it then becomes more rugged for an hour or so as it sidles the valley. Eventually, you may lose the track markers, in which case just stick to the riverbed.

At the junction with Opureke Track, head in an easterly direction towards Lower Matakuhia Hut. When Wilderness was there, there was windfall and debris to negotiate. Two small gorges could be problematic if it rained, but there is a bush route around one of them.

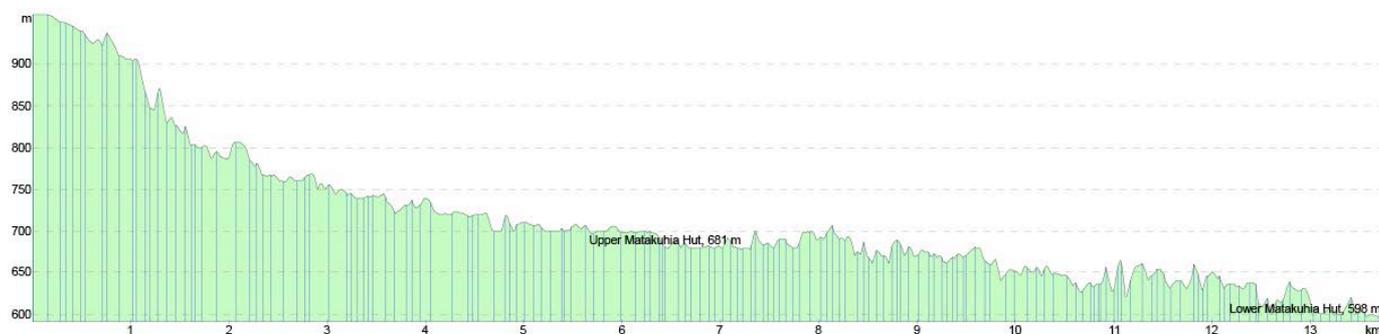
There are plenty of blue ducks to be seen in the stream.

After eight hours, Lower Matakuhia Hut should be in sight. Storms have caused flooding here in the past and it shows, both in the mess around the hut and the state of the hut's floor.

The hut book shows most visitors come via the Opureke Track and have strong words about it.

After a night at the hut, retrace your steps to the road end.

Elevation Profile



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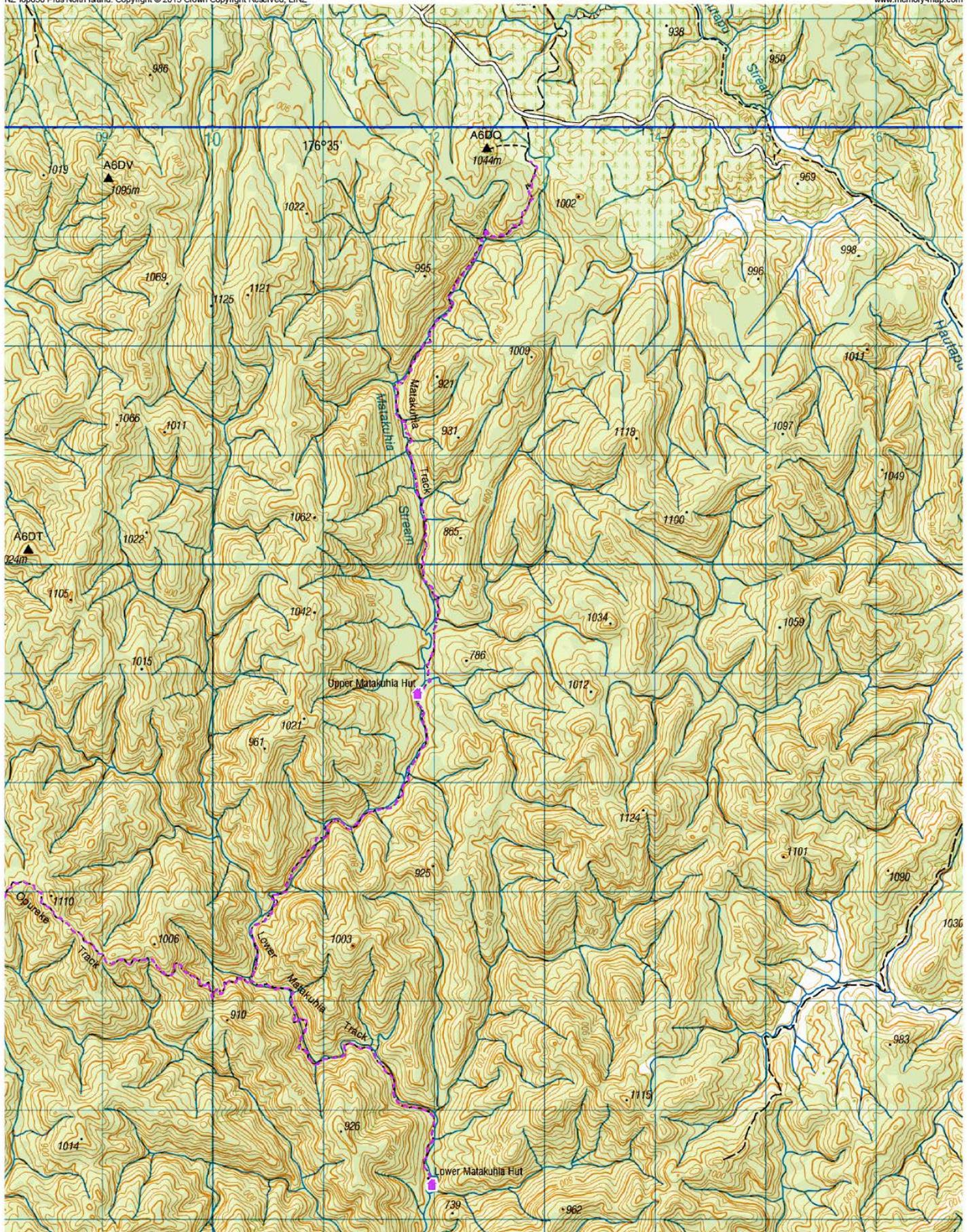
Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, Wilderness Magazine does not take responsibility for any errors in the route. Users should use discretion when planning their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing.

Maps are created with Memory-Map software, version 6. This software shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts – meaning they are where they say they are and should be passable. If a purple track is shown, it is the route from the Memory-Map software. If a red or blue route is shown, it has been drawn by Wilderness.

Lower Matakuhia Hut via Upper Matakuhia Hut, Waipunga Forest. Topo50 map

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Lower Matakuhia Hut via Upper Matakuhia Hut, Waipunga Forest. 1:25k scale

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