

Totara Flats Hut via Tutuwai Hut, Tararua Forest Park

This three day loop to Cone Hut and on to Tutuwai Hut in the Tauherenikau Valley traverses classic Tararua country.

The trip starts with a swing-bridge over the Waiohine River before the track to Cone Hut starts, with a short, sharp, heart-cracking ascent. Once the ridge is reached there is airy beech forest with surprisingly dry ground underneath. About 800m before Cone Saddle, a steep track drops straight down to Cone Hut. It's a mercifully brief descent to the hut, the second oldest in the Tararuas and overflowing with character.

But Tutuwai Hut provides a more modern form of accommodation. The trail to Tutuwai runs beside the enticing Tauherenikau River and is a relaxing and easy walk.

From Tutuwai Hut, stroll back up the valley to Cone Saddle. From here, it's a serious ascent to Cone, 1080m, punctuated by a variety of scrambles around some quite substantial windfalls.

The bush ends abruptly at the tussock tops of the Tararuas. Continue along the track along Cone Ridge, through twisted goblin forest. The trees conceal how precarious the ridge is.

Beyond the turn off for Neill Forks Hut the track descends rapidly. Goblin forest gives way to beech forest before the track reaches the Waiohine River and Totara Flats Hut.

From the hut, follow the Waiohine River through mixed podocarp forest and across a series of delightful side streams, ending back at the Waiohine Gorge Road end.

Wild File

Access Waiohine Gorge Road

Grade Easy-Moderate

Time Waiohine Gorge to Tutuwai Hut, 4hr; To Totara Flats Hut via Cone Ridge, 7.5hr; To Waiohine Gorge Road end, 3.5hr

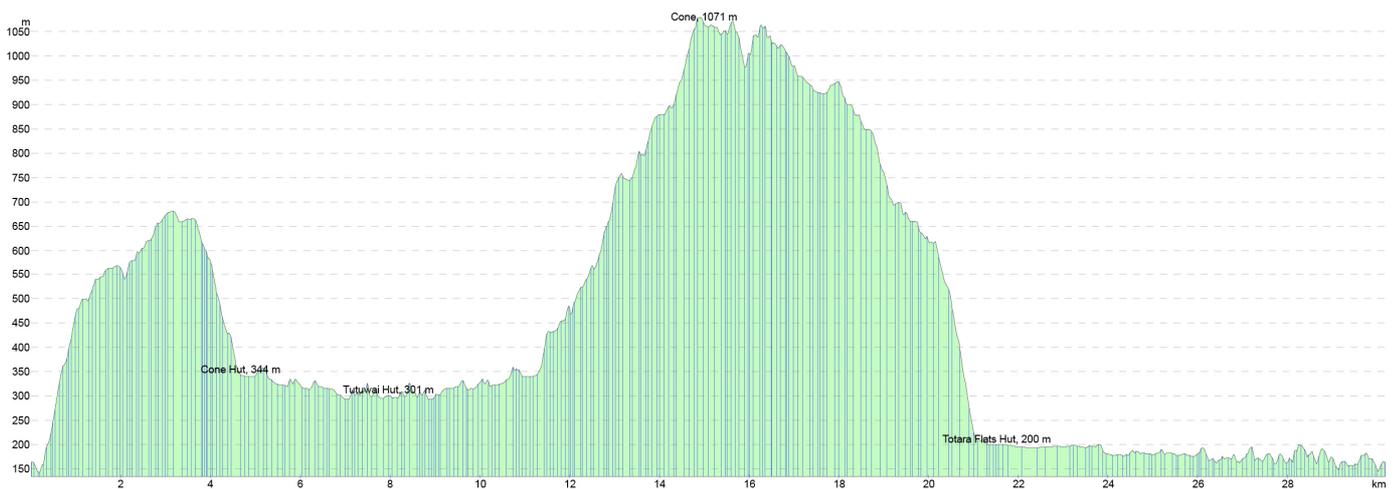
Distance 30.2km

Total ascent 2124m

Accommodation Cone Hut (free, six bunks); Tutuwai Hut (\$15, 20 bunks); Totara Flats Hut (\$15, 26 bunks)

Map BP33

Elevation Profile



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