

Pinnacle Ridge, Tararua Forest Park

This beautiful ridge, home to varied vegetation and birdlife, is almost entirely below the bushline, so is suitable for when a gale is blowing and tops travel is out.

The route isn't marked on the topo map but it's a good footpath and there are frequent markers. It's obviously well-used and there's hand-crafted signs along the way.

A few hundred metres from Holdsworth Lodge a bridge spans Atiwhakatu Stream. Stay on the true left of the stream – don't cross – and travel along its bank. This is a trapping route with a variety of traps on display. After about a kilometre, markers indicate to turn uphill for the grunty part of the walk – a 600m, two kilometre ascent to Pinnacle (877m). The ascending track skirts the top of a large slip at around 400m elevation, offering a good reason to stop for a breather and look back down to Donnelly's Flat – a popular camping area. Pinnacle is the only point of the route that breaks above the bush line, and from here are views over the Holdsworth-Jumbo route. A recently installed plaque remembers Ron who apparently loved this track, and who I think is responsible for its good condition and cute signage.

From Pinnacle, the ridge track is easy going and mostly downhill, with two minor saddles to ascend toward Pt862 and Pt846 respectively. At Pt862 keep an eye on the compass to avoid heading off on the northeast spur to Pt800. Although the track isn't marked on the topo map, Pinnacle Ridge is.

A couple of signed junctions point to shortcuts into the Atiwhakatu Valley. Ignore them and follow the permat markers along the ridgetop. The ridge broadens and ladder fern threatens to obscure the path but there are enough markers to keep on track.

Eventually, at the northern terminus of Pinnacle Ridge, you'll emerge onto the Barton Track that, to the right, leads to Mitre Flats Hut. You're now back on official tracks but the going, instead of getting easier, gets harder for a while. Turn left and soon you'll pass the Baldy Track junction. Turn left again and begin the descent to the Atiwhakatu swingbridge. It's steep, rough and slow.

After the bridge, continue to Atiwhakatu Hut. This section is up and down, rooty, rocky and boggy, but gets much easier after the hut.

The popular track after the hut descends 180m over seven kilometres. Your stride will lengthen and within 90min from the hut the final bridge will be crossed and the car park will be reached.

Wildfile

Access Mt Holdsworth Road end

Grade Moderate

Time 7-8hr

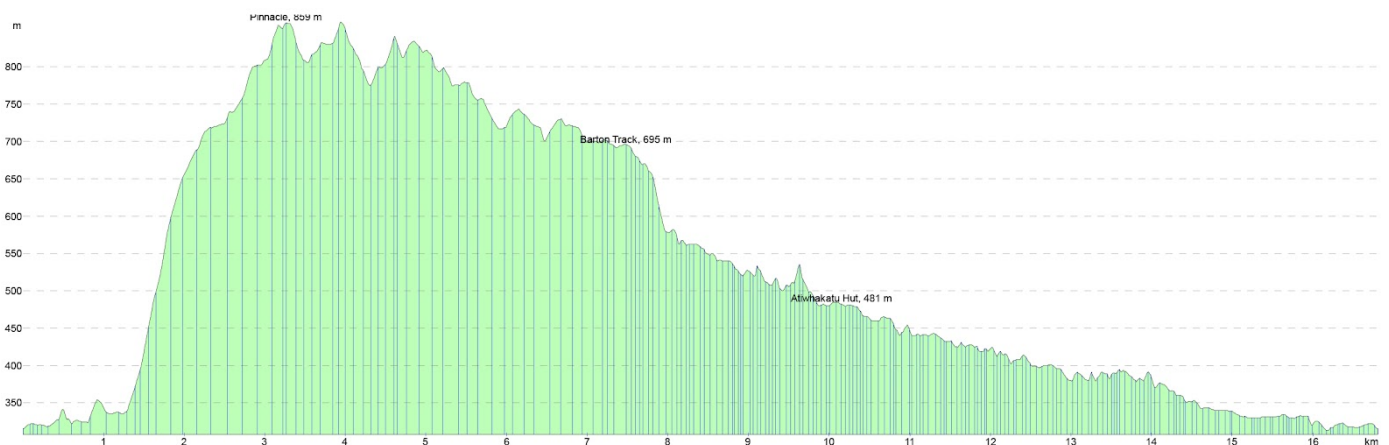
Distance 17km

Total ascent 1010m

Accommodation Atiwhakatu Hut (\$15, 26 bunks)

Topo50 map BP34

Elevation



Pinnacle Ridge, Tararua Forest Park

