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*Front Cover:  
Lake and Mt Tarawera and Kokako*

Published by:  
Department of Conservation  
PO Box 281, Rotorua  
Revised Edition October 2005



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## INTRODUCTION

Nau mai, haere mai, welcome to the Rotorua Lakes area! Here you will find one of the most distinctive landscapes in the country, with its unique geothermal features, beautiful lakes and native bush. It is also an extremely important region, culturally and historically, with its rich Maori heritage and popular geothermal attractions. Volcanic in origin, the area boasts numerous lakes, with Lake Rotorua as the focal point. The city of Rotorua embraces this lake, while Mount Ngongotaha (743m) overlooks the town and surrounding district.

Due to the large number of lakes, there is an abundance of waterfowl and wetland birds in the area. Many areas are designated as wildlife refuges specifically for their protection — for example, Sulphur Point, Hamurana and Rotomahana. The southernmost bay on Lake Rotorua is an unusual wildlife refuge. It is affected by the thermal field and the water is warm, milky, sulphurous, shallow and low in oxygen. Over 60 species of bird have been recorded in this area, including 45 native species. This type of habitat, with a large, flat surface close to a lake, is rare in the region and the bay is a wetland of international importance.

The Rotorua region is also notable for its pockets of kokako populations. This endangered native bird, unique to New Zealand, is slowly making a comeback thanks largely to the significant contributions made by the local communities working alongside the Department of Conservation (DOC). Other birds which can be seen or heard along the tracks listed in this publication include tui, bellbirds, kereru, kaka, North Island robins, fantails and ruru (morepork). A privately-owned island in the middle of Lake Rotorua — Mokoia Island — is home to several endangered native birds, including North Island brown kiwi, tieke (saddleback), weka, and tui. Visits to the island can be arranged through JONZ Corporation (07 346 8332).

A fascinating variety of plants have made this area their home, from rare geothermal vegetation, towering rimu trees and tiny native orchids to lush green ferns.

With a relatively mild climate, Rotorua is one of the least windy places in the country. Winters are cool because of the general elevation of the district, and frosts are common between May and October. Rotorua summers are warm, with the occasional temperature rising above 30°C.

DOC has been entrusted with the management and protection of NZ's native fauna and flora, and of many natural and historic places.

## SAFETY INFORMATION

**Fires:** If you see a fire dial 111.

### Report any safety hazards

If you think there is a safety hazard in a conservation area, call DOC Hotline or the nearest Department of Conservation office.  
DOC Hotline 0800 362 468

### For your safety

You need to be well prepared when tramping on conservation land, especially on the longer, day walks. Ensure you have strong comfortable boots, warm clothing (e.g. polypropylene), a good raincoat, first aid kit, food and drink, a hat and sunscreen. It is also advisable to leave your tramping intentions with a responsible person, in case you get lost.

### GEOTHERMAL HAZARDS

The geothermal landscape is extremely fragile, and is also a potentially dangerous environment. Visitors should keep to the tracks. Hazards include falling through thin crust surfaces, being burnt by hot geothermal gases or fluids, and inhalation of fatal concentrations of carbon dioxide and sulphur gases. Visitors to geothermal areas are therefore urged to:

- Keep to managed sites that are publicised.
- Keep to the tracks.
- Do not walk on silica terraces.
- Keep children under close supervision at all times in geothermal areas.
- Do not pick plants.
- Do not ride bicycles.
- Do not drop rubbish or throw stones onto geothermal features.

**NOTE:** When bathing in geothermal water do not immerse your head, due to the risk of contracting the fatal disease Amoebic Meningitis. This disease is caused by water containing the amoeba entering through the nasal passages.

*For more information on the cultural, historical and scientific aspects of Rotorua's geothermal features, check out the information leaflet "Rotorua's Geothermal Treasures" on the DOC website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).*

## WATER QUALITY — GIARDIA

*Some facts you should know about Giardia:*

- The parasite Giardia has been found in many lakes rivers and streams throughout New Zealand, including the Rotorua Lakes area.
- Not visible by the naked eye, Giardia can be spread by any mammal, and can occur as a result of poor hygiene, unhygienic food handling and by drinking contaminated water.
- The parasite is spread by cysts being passed in faeces and subsequently entering a new host through the mouth. **Poor toilet waste disposal can result in cysts entering water systems such as rivers and lakes. Giardia cysts can survive in very cold water. Please ensure that you use toilet facilities where provided. If there is no toilet, ensure you are at least 50m away from any water sources; dig a small hole no deeper than 30cm (that is where the decomposing bacteria live), and cover your waste with dirt to discourage flies.**
- The parasite lives in the intestines of its host.
- Signs and symptoms are: explosive foul-smelling diarrhoea, stomach cramps, bloating, dehydration, nausea and weight loss.
- As a carrier, you risk spreading the parasite to the environment and other people.
- Treatment is simple and fast acting with prescribed drugs. If you think you have Giardia, see your doctor.

If you suspect that water may be contaminated with Giardia, there are 3 ways to make it safe:

- 1) **Boiling the water** — bring water to a fast boil for more than 3 minutes.
- 2) **Chemical purification** — probably the most effective means of chemical purification is using iodine solutions (available from chemists and many outdoor shops). The effectiveness of chlorine-based purification tablets is varied. Check the manufacturer's specifications on the packet to ensure that the tablets will kill Giardia.
- 3) **Filtration** — portable filtering mechanisms are available from most outdoor shops. Water filtered through Giardia-rated filters need not be boiled.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CARE CODE

- Treat our plants and animals with care and respect.
- Remove your rubbish.
- In areas without toilet facilities, bury toilet waste in a shallow hole away from waterways, tracks and campsites.
- Keep streams and lakes clean — soaps and detergents are harmful to waterlife.
- No open fires — use portable gas stoves.
- Where camping is permitted, camp carefully.
- Keep to the track — to prevent damaging fragile plants.
- Consider others.
- Respect our cultural heritage.
- Enjoy your visit!

*Toitu te whenua  
(Leave the land undisturbed)*



## WATER CARE CODE

- **Find out first** — about the regulations governing recreational use of waterways and access.
- **Stay on established tracks and use existing facilities** — to protect riverbanks and foreshores, and not disturb wildlife.
- **Take care of your gear** — careless use of your equipment can harm wildlife and other users.
- **Remove rubbish** — litter is unattractive, harmful to wildlife and pollutes water.
- **Dispose of toilet waste properly** — improper disposal of toilet waste can contaminate water, damage the environment, and is culturally offensive. Use disposal facilities where provided or bury waste in a shallow hole at least 50m away from waterways.
- **Be careful with chemicals** — use chemicals sparingly and refuel with care. Dispose of cooking and washing water well away from the source.
- **Respect our cultural heritage** — many NZ waterways have special cultural, spiritual or historical values. Treat these places with consideration and respect.
- **Take only the food you need** — when taking food from the sea or freshwater, don't overdo it. Sustain life in our waterways by taking only what you need and no more than the legal limit.
- **Consider plants and animals** — remember we are only visitors to water environments. Other animals and plant species live there all the time.
- **Consider other people** — everyone has the right to enjoy the environment in safety.

*Toitu te marae a tane*

*Toitu te marae a tangaroa*

*(Leave the forest and sea undisturbed)*



## TRACK CLASSIFICATION

### Walking Track

Easy well formed walking surface suitable for people of most ages and fitness levels. Physically well defined or clearly marked with plastic orange triangles.

### Tramping Track

Requires skill and experience, suitable for people of average fitness. Marked with plastic orange triangles, limited track formation.

### Route

Requires a higher degree of skill, experience and route finding ability. Routes may be sparsely marked with plastic orange triangles.

### KiwiWalks

KiwiWalks are a series of walks throughout NZ that are:

- Easily accessible to a person wearing leisure footwear.
- No more than one hour in duration.
- Suitable for most ages and fitness levels.
- Free.



**NOTE:** *On public conservation land, several types of plastic triangles may be attached to trees beside the track. Visitors should follow only the orange triangles. Triangles of other colours — such as pink or purple — are there for management purposes (e.g. possum control lines). Please keep off these other tracks and do not interfere with the markers.*



On the riverbank there are a number of plant species with important traditional uses. Plants such as raupo were part of the traditional rongoa (medicines) for the people. Raw materials for weaving and other crafts are still gathered from the riverbanks.

## GETTING THERE

Okere Falls Scenic Reserve is located 21 km from Rotorua on Trout Pool Road off SH 33 (the Rotorua to Tauranga highway).

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

### Walks

#### Okere Falls Tracks



**Grade:** Walking track (easy). Wheelchair access to overlook hydroelectric power station site and turbine.

**Length:** 1.2 km

**Time:** 30 minutes one way

**Description:** There is a well-formed bushwalk with scenic lookouts over the Okere River and its spectacular waterfalls. There are also numerous information panels along the track, interpreting both the human and natural landscape.

*More detailed land and lake information for the Okere Falls area can be obtained from the topographical map U15 in the Infomap 260 1:50,000 series.*

**Picnic Area** A wide grassy area beside the main carpark provides a good site for a picnic.

**Fishing** The Trout Pool is a popular fishing spot, and trout can often be seen swimming gently against the current.

**Rafting** From the main lookout platform by Hinemoa's Steps you can watch rafters and kayakers sweep over the highest commercially rafted waterfall in the world.

**Toilets** Public toilets are provided at the main carpark.

**Parking** There are two carparks: the main one, which is the first one reached from the highway, and the other is at Trout Pool carpark at the end of Trout Pool Road. *CAUTION: the carparks are prone to visits by thieves — ensure your vehicles are locked and you take all your valuables with you.*

### SAFETY ADVICE

No swimming — dangerously strong currents and waterfalls.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

### Hydroelectric Power Station Site

The expansion of the tourist industry in the Rotorua region late last century demanded power for facilities such as sewers and drains. As early as 1882, a local hotel owner had been in touch with Thomas Edison in the USA intending to have his premises lit by electricity. However, it wasn't until 1897 that moves began to secure land for a power station at Okere Falls. In 1899, the tender was let to build a generating plant. The turbines were brought to the site by a bullock team, and connected to two 50 kilowatt (kW) generators, enabling 100 kW output. The completed power station came into operation in May 1901, just in time for a visit from the Duke and Duchess of York. The Okere Falls Power Station was only the fourth in New Zealand — up until then only Reefton, Wellington and Stratford had electric power. The power station played an important part in NZ's history and contributed greatly to the development of the area. One family was so proud of its electricity that an electric kettle was placed alongside the children in an official family photograph! Equally proud were the people of Tamatekapua, which was the first electrically-lit Maori meeting house in the country. The demand for electricity in Rotorua grew, exceeding all expectations. By 1907 it could no longer be met by the existing power station and consequently a wing dam was designed out from the head gates into the river. Completed in 1908, this wing dam brought enough water to run another 100 kW turbine. This doubled the power station's output to 200 kW.

The power station became obsolete in the 1930s and officially closed on 30 September 1939. As part of the conservation management of this historic site, one of the turbines was hauled up the riverbank in 1995 and given preservation treatment. This turbine is now on view beside the track.

### ORIGINAL STEPS TO THE POWER STATION

The spectacular force of the Okere River can be viewed via a steep flight of steps beside the main carpark. Caution should be taken when using these steps, as they can be slippery and require a reasonable level of fitness. Care should also be taken with children, as the steps descend to a barrier overlooking the fast-flowing river.

### HINEMOA'S STEPS

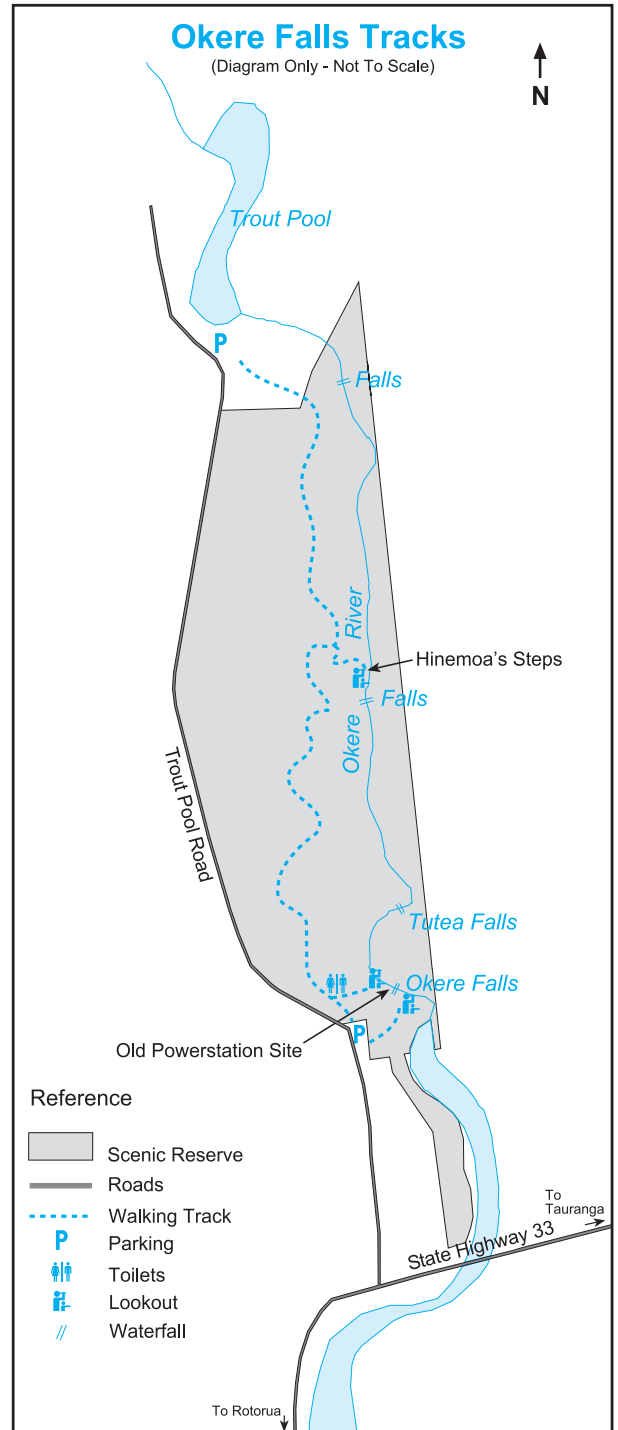
Formed in 1907 out of the rock face beside the waterfall, these steps lead to the Tutea Caves and the thundering falls. They proved to be a great tourist attraction and for some years a photographer was permanently stationed at the bottom of the steps. They were named after Hinemoa, a well-known local Maori woman.

## TUTEA CAVES

These nga ana, or caves, are located at the base of Hinemoa's Steps. Little is known about the history of the caves although they are associated with Tutea, a local chief. Some sources suggest that women and children may have hidden in the caves in times of war, making the treacherous descent by rope. Nowadays the occasional occupants are cave wetas. For safety reasons there is no access into these caves.

## RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Okere Falls Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping, hunting.



## HINEHOPU / HONGI'S TRACK

### SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this area lies in its important historic and scenic values. The track which runs through the area has two names: Hinehopu's Track and Hongi's Track. Originally it was named after the Maori chieftainess, Hinehopu, who lived in the area around 1620. Hinehopu kept two homes, one at Rotoiti and the other at Rotoehu and often travelled between the two lakes. The track and area between the two lakes was named after her. The name Hongi was given to the area when the famous Ngapuhi warrior, Hongi, transferred his canoes from Lake Rotoehu to Lake Rotoiti in 1823 in order to perform a surprise raid on the Arawa people on Mokoia Island, Lake Rotorua.

Hinehopu's Tree (also known as the Sacred Matai, or 'wishing tree' of Ngati Pikiao) is passed along this track and is also accessible from SH 30. It is said that as a child, Hinehopu was hidden under the matai by her mother to protect her from possible enemies. Later she met her husband, Pikiao (II) under the tree. When they joined as husband and wife the tree became sacred to their union. The ceremony "Uru-uru-whenua" is performed by travellers passing the matai to ensure protection from evil spirits and fine weather for the remainder of their journey.

Lake Rotoiti is the third largest lake in the Rotorua area, reaching 15 km in length. It is connected to Lake Rotorua through the Ohau Channel and drains into the Okere and Kaituna Rivers. An abundance of suitable habitat around the water's edge means this lake supports a good number and variety of birdlife.

Lake Rotoehu is a secluded lake with limited vehicle access. The northern end is surrounded by native bush, with margins of reeds and raupo providing good breeding areas for waterfowl. The rare Australasian bittern can occasionally be seen stalking the raupo beds for food. Lake Rotoehu Scenic Reserve consists predominantly of regenerating young forest.

### GETTING THERE

Hinehopu's (Hongi's) track is situated 20 km north-east of Rotorua off SH 30. The track journeys through the Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserve and the Hinehopu Scenic Reserve, and can be accessed from either the Rotoiti or Rotoehu end (see track map).

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

### Walks

#### Hinehopu (Hongi's) Track

Grade: Walking track (easy)  
Length: 2.2 km  
Time: 1½ hours (one way)



#### Special features:

Native forest and historic/cultural importance. Beautiful beach at Korokitewao Bay (Lake Rotoiti) for swimming and picnicing.

#### Description:

The track runs from Korokitewao Bay (Lake Rotoiti) to Te Pohue Bay (Lake Rotoehu), through a forest of rimu, tawa, pukatea and rewarewa. It leads to SH 30 at the sacred matai, then a small loop track takes you back to the previous track or on to Lake Rotoehu (15 minutes from the sacred matai).

**Boat Ramps** On Lake Rotoiti, boat ramps are situated at Otaramarae, Hinehopu, Gisborne Point and the delta at Waipuna Bay.

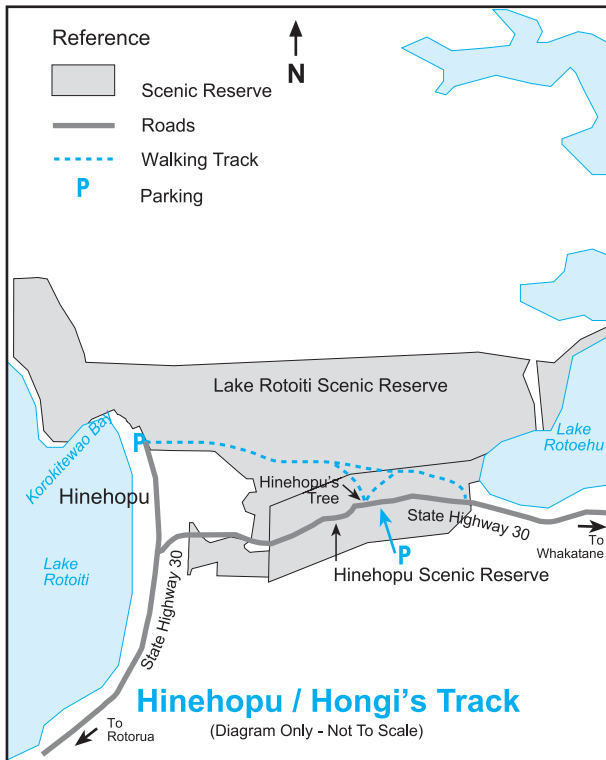
On Lake Rotoehu there are three boat ramps — Te Wairoa Bay, Otautu Bay and Te Pohue Bay. (Otautu and Te Pohue ramps are subject to lake levels.)

**Parking** The best carparking facilities for the track are at the Rotoiti side, at Korokitewao Bay. Here there are toilet facilities, plenty of parking space, and beautiful water for a refreshing swim after your walk.

**Picnic Areas** With boat access, numerous tranquil picnic spots can be found around the lakes. Whangaikorea (Honeymoon Bay) is a favourite spot, with toilets and a jetty. Two sites on the Paehinahina Point provide secluded spots. With vehicle access only, Korokitewao Bay provides a sandy beach, picnic tables, a children's playground, toilets and crystal clear water.

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Hinehopu Scenic Reserve or Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping, hunting without a permit.



## ROTOMA BRIDLE TRACK

### SIGNIFICANCE

This is an old bridle track which passes through a magnificent stand of native bush, with towering rimu and tawa and an understorey of leafy hinau, pukatea, ferns and kohekohe.

The crystal clear waters of Lake Rotoma provide numerous recreation opportunities and the Whakarewarewa and Onewhero lagoons (north-east end of the lake) are home to a wide diversity of bird species. Canadian geese, dabchicks, scaup and paradise ducks are present in good numbers.

### GETTING THERE

The track is situated approximately 40 km north-east of Rotorua beside SH 30. The most suitable place for parking is on Manawahe Road, by the junction with SH 30.

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES/FACILITIES

#### Walks

#### Rotoma Bridle Track

Grade: Walking track (easy)  
 Length: 1 km  
 Time: 20 minutes each way

#### Special Features:

Beautiful native bush.

#### Description:

The track runs parallel to SH 30, from Manawahe Road to Whangaroa Bay on Lake Rotoma.

### FACILITIES

**Boat Ramps** There is one boat ramp in Whangaroa Bay and another on the south-east shore (Matahi Lagoon area).

**Lake Access** Main access to the lake is off SH 30, beside the Matahi Lagoon area. Access to the secluded northern beaches is via Manawahe Road and a short access road (see track map) for which a 4 wheel drive is required.

**Toilets** Facilities are provided at the Matahi Lagoon area. There are no facilities at the Manawahe beach.

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Lake Rotoma Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants and animals, camping, hunting without a permit.

## LAKE OKATAINA TRACKS

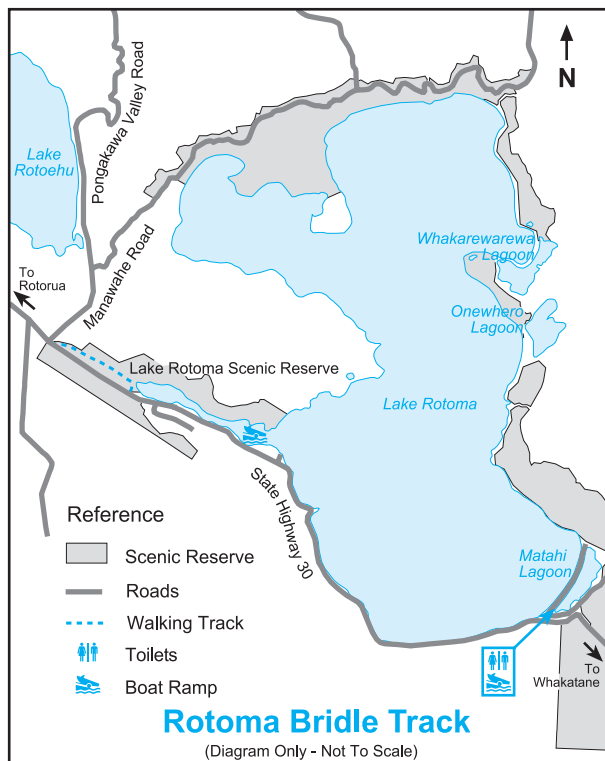
### SIGNIFICANCE

The name Okataina means ‘the lake of laughter’, and is a shortened form of the original name *Te Moana-i-Kataina-a-Te Rangitakaroro*, which means ‘the lake where Te Rangitakaroro laughed’. The name and its meaning relate to an incident where Chief Te Rangitakaroro and his warriors were resting on what is now a submerged rock. It is said that one member of his group referred to the lake as an ocean and this was seen as a great joke by the rest of the group. Their laughter echoed around the lake and now remains enshrined in its name.

The Lake Okataina area was an important link in pre-European routes, when canoes were carried from Tarawera to Okataina, and from Okataina to Rotoiti. Okataina Road follows one of these ancient portage routes.

As with all the lakes within the Okataina Volcanic Complex, Lake Okataina is of volcanic origin. The lake lies on the western margin of the Haroharo Caldera — a large basin formed by catastrophic collapse during enormous volcanic eruptions in the past. The last of these eruptions occurred 64,000 years ago, leaving an 18 km by 24 km hole in the ground, more than 1 km deep. This hole has since been largely filled in by smaller, but still huge, eruptions during which the volcanic piles of Mt Tarawera and Haroharo have been built up over the last 20,000 years. Lake Okataina occupies the ‘moat’ which remains between the Haroharo lava pile (eastern side of the lake) and the western rim of the Haroharo Caldera. The lake was formerly an arm of Lake Tarawera until 7000 years ago, when the lava dome forming the southern margin of Lake Okataina was thrust up out of the ground, cutting the lake off from Lake Tarawera. Then, 5000 years ago, massive lava flows erupted on the eastern margin of Lake Okataina, from the Matatiti Dome summit of the Haroharo massif.

Lake Okataina has no surface outlet. Instead, it drains southwards by seepage through fissured lava from Otangimoana Bay towards Lake Tarawera, which is about 20m lower in elevation. Because the level of Lake Okataina is not controlled by overflow, the level fluctuates dramatically with long-term rainfall trends. A rise of more than 10m has occurred in the last 100 years or so. Between 1962 and 1971 the lake rose 3m, submerging beaches and damaging bush. During dry spells, the lakebed can be exposed. Such rapidly changing lake levels were the main reason for the Ngati Tarawhai people moving away from the area before 1900. Ngati Tarawhai, a sub-tribe of Te Arawa, are the principal iwi (tribe) associated with the Okataina district.



On 29th January 1921, Ngati Tarawahi gifted the shore of Lake Okataina to the crown, to be set aside as a reserve. This endowment was affixed with several conditions, one of which was that a committee of Ngati Tarawahi should administer the reserve. Today, that responsibility rests with the Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve Board. DOC administers the Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve for and on behalf of the Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve Board.

Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve contains fine examples of rimu, totara, rata and kahikatea. Pohutukawa grace the lake shores, and the reserve is also rich in birdlife.

### GETTING THERE BY VEHICLE

The lake and the Scenic Reserve short walks are accessed from Okataina Road — turn off SH 30 (Whakatane/Rotorua Highway) at Ruato, 22 km from Rotorua.

### GETTING THERE BY FOOT

The walkway descriptions below detail other walking access (e.g. Eastern and Western Okataina Walkways).

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

**Walking:** Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve provides a wealth of walking opportunities ranging from easy walks to difficult tramping — these are described in detail below. More detailed land and lake information for the Okataina area can be obtained from the topographical maps U15, U16, V15, V16 in the Infomap 260 1:50,000 series.

### Short Walks

Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve short walks are accessed from Okataina Road (see map).

Track No.	Name	Grade	Time	Features	Kiwi Walk
1	Rongomai	Tramping track (moderate)	40 min	Native bush.	No
2	Ngahopua (Twin Lakes Track)	Walking track (easy)	50 min loop	Views of two crater lakes - Rotongata and Rotoatua.	Yes
3	Anaha	Walking track (easy)	60 min loop	Old logging sites.	Yes
4	Kepa	Walking track (easy)	10 min	Old logging sites.	Yes
5	Te Auheke (Cascades Track)	Walking track (easy)	40 min loop	Cascade waterfall and glow worms.	Yes
6	Tarawhai	Walking track (easy)	1 hr loop	Nature trail with info panels.	Yes
7	Lake Okataina to Education Centre	Walking track	1 hour One way	Native bush.	No
8	Waipungapunga	Walking track (easy)	20 minutes One way	Native bush.	No

### Rongomai Track

**Location:** A section of the Western Okataina Walkway, between Patotara and the Outdoor Education Centre.

**Grade:** Tramping track.

**Length:** 1.7 km

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Te Auheke Track** (*means 'tumbling water'*). This track is also known as the **Cascades Track**.

**Location:** Begins 100m west of the Outdoor Education Centre.

**Grade:** Walking track (easy).

**Length:** 1.5 km

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Special Features:**

The track passes a sheer cliff face which is covered by moss and ferns by day and thousands of glow worms at night. Cascade Falls are approximately 10m high with water falling over and around many rock protrusions, creating a picturesque scene.

**Description:**

A circular track which passes the sheer cliff and Cascade Falls.

**Ngahopua Track** (*means 'depressions' or 'bowls'*). This track is also known as the **Twin Lakes Track**.

**Location:** Commences immediately opposite the side road to the Outdoor Education Centre, on Okataina Road.

**Grade:** Walking track (easy).

**Length:** 2 km

**Time:** 50 minutes

**Special Features:**

The track passes 100m above the twin volcanic crater lakes of Rotongata and Rotoatua, which were formed about 3,500 years ago. They support a variety of interesting birdlife from harrier hawks to scaup and dabchicks.

**Description:**

A circular track which gives walkers excellent views of the two crater lakes.

### Kepa Track

**Location:** Commences off Okataina Road, 100m south of Outdoor Education Centre.

**Grade:** Walking track (easy).

**Length:** 425 m

**Time:** 10 minutes



### Special Features:

Named after Kapa Ehau, who was largely responsible for the scenic reserve status of the area.

### Description:

The track takes walkers through clearings where evidence of past logging activity remains in the form of old log-loading skids. The track meets up with the Anaha Track.

### Anaha Track

**Location:** Commences approximately 100m south of the Outdoor Education Centre, off Okataina Road and finishes 1.2km further down the road.

**Grade:** Walking track (easy).

**Length:** 2.3 km

**Time:** 60 minutes



### Special Features:

Named after Anaha Te Rahui, a master carver in the Rotorua District.

### Description:

The track passes through old logging sites where the log-loading ramps or skids are still apparent.

### Tarawhai Track

**Location:** Commences 50m down the side road leading to the Education Centre.

**Grade:** Walking track (easy).

**Length:** 1.3 km

**Time:** 50 minutes



### Special Features:

A wide variety of native trees line this nature trail, many of which have name plates. This makes for an interesting and informative interpretation walk. A 5m by 5m fenced-off area has been created beside the southern end of this track to illustrate the effects of introduced browsers (notably, wallabies) on the native vegetation.

### Description:

A circular track which passes some fine examples of rimu, pukatea and tawa, with a wide variety of other native plants present.

### Eastern Okataina Walkway: *Lake Okataina Carpark (Tauranganui Bay) to Humphries Bay (Lake Tarawera)*

**Grade:** Walking track (moderate) overall, however the section from the Okataina carpark to Kaiwaka Bay is classified as 'easy'.

**Length:** 10½ km

**Time:** 3 hours one way (for section times refer to the table on page 23)

### Special Features:

This track passes below the Soundshell, a large natural amphitheatre formed by cliffs of volcanic rock with access to Te Koutu Point. This is the site of the main pa on the lake where numerous deep food pits and terraces still remain. Please do not disturb this archaeological area.

### Description:

The track meanders through native bush, offering splendid lake views. There are several options to branch off the track and head down to the lake at Te Koutu/Soundshell, Kaiwaka Bay and Otangimoana Bay — all pleasant sites for a swim or a picnic. From Otangimoana Bay, the track climbs away from Okataina overland and then descends into Humphries Bay on Lake Tarawera. Walkers then have the choice of returning the same way or continuing onwards for 3 hours to Tarawera Outlet along the Northern Tarawera Track (refer to Lake Tarawera section).

### FACILITIES

There are toilets, a carpark and a grassed area for picnicing at Tauranganui Bay. At the end of the walkway at Humphries Bay there is a toilet and an informal camping and picnicing area. A great place for a swim, with beautiful water and superb views of Mt Tarawera.

### Western Okataina Walkway: *Ngapuka Bay (Lake Rotoiti) to Millar Road (near Lake Okareka)*

Western Okataina Walkway can be walked in its entirety from Ngapuka Bay (SH 30, 21 km from Rotorua) or Millar Road (11 km from Rotorua). Sections can be accessed conveniently from the Okataina Outdoor Education Centre, Rongomai track or Waipungapunga track (all located off Okataina Road).

### Longer Day Walks

Track No.	Name	Section	Grade	Time	Features	Kiwi Walk
9	Eastern Okataina Walkway	Whole length: Tauranganui Bay to Humphries Bay (Lake Tarawera).	Walking track (moderate)	3hrs 1 way	See sections.	In parts — see below
9(a)	Eastern Okataina Walkway	Tauranganui Bay (Okataina Carpark) to Soundshell.	Day visitor — walking track	10min 1 way	'Soundshell' — natural amphitheatre formed by cliffs and volcanic rock. View out over a terraced pa site at Te Koutu point.	Yes
9(b)	Eastern Okataina Walkway	Soundshell to Kaiwaka Bay.	Day visitor — walking track	40min	Lake views.	No
9(c)	Eastern Okataina Walkway	Kaiwaka Bay to Otangimoana Bay.	Day visitor — walking/ tramping track	1hr 50min 1 way	Lake views.	No
9(d)	Eastern Okataina Walkway	Otangimoana Bay to Humphries Bay (Lake Tarawera).	Day visitor — walking/ tramping track	20min 1 way	Link track between Lakes Okataina and Tarawera.	No

Track No.	Name	Section	Grade	Time	Features
10	Western Okataina Walkway.	Whole length.	Tramping track (moderate/hard)	7hrs 1 way (22.5km)	See sections below.
10(a)	Western Okataina Walkway.	Ngapuka Bay to Outdoor Education Centre.	Tramping track (moderate/hard)	2 hrs	Views over Lake Rotoiti. Walk through Patotara (the 'Bullring') - a dry volcanic crater and then along Rongomai Track.
10(b)	Western Okataina Walkway.	Outdoor Education Centre to Whakapoungakau Trig Junction.	Tramping track (moderate/hard)	2 hrs 1 way	Native bush.
10(c)	Western Okataina Walkway.	Whakapoungakau Track Junction to Millar Road (Lake Okareka).	Tramping track (moderate/hard)	3 hrs 1 way	Native bush .
11	Western Okataina Walkway.	Whakapoungakau Trig Track.	Tramping track (moderate/hard)	40min return	Whakapoungakau Trig (758m ASL) provides stunning views over Lake Rotorua and surrounding districts.

### Western Okataina Walkway:

**Location:** Commences off SH 30 at Ngapuka Bay, (Lake Rotoiti) and finishes at Millar Road, (Lake Okareka).

**Grade:** Tramping track (moderate/hard)

**Length:** 22.5 km

**Time:** 7 hours

**General Description:**

This track may be broken into sections to allow walkers to select parts of the walkway. The track sections are as follows:

- **Ngapuka Bay to Okataina Outdoor Education Centre**

**Location:** Off SH 30 at Ngapuka Bay, (Lake Rotoiti)

**Grade:** Tramping track (moderate/hard)

**Length:** 4 km

**Time:** 2 hours

**Special Features:**

Scenic views of Lake Rotoiti are offered and the track passes through the centre of an interesting dry crater named Patotara (the 'Bullring'). A map of the area will show you how this dry crater lies along a line of explosion craters which include Lake Rotokawau to the west, and to the east the lakes Rotongata and Rotoatua (the 'twin lakes' visible on the Ngahopua Track — see Short Walks track information above).

**Description:** The first 15 minutes climb steeply to the top of a ridge before levelling out and continuing along an old logging road. After half an hour look for a walkway post on your right. This is where the descent to Patotara crater begins. After zig-zagging out of the crater you can branch

right to continue to the Outdoor Education Centre along the Rongomai Track.

- **Outdoor Education Centre to Millar Road (Lake Okareka)**

**Location:** This track, signposted 'Western Okataina Walkway', starts at the Outdoor Education Centre.

**Description:**

Ten minutes down the Western Okataina Walkway track there is a track branching off to your left. This is the 50 minute Tarawhai Track which loops back to the Outdoor Education Centre.

Another 5 minutes down the Western Okataina Walkway brings you to a junction: the left hand track is the Waipungapunga Track, and it leads down to the Okataina Road and Lake Okataina; the right hand track is the Western Okataina Walkway. This track is steep in places, and the surface may be rough and uneven, but the view from Whakapoungakau Trig (2 hours uphill from this junction) is well worth the effort. The Trig is a 20 minute detour off the Western Okataina Walkway. Being 756m above sea level, magnificent views over the surrounding lakes can be seen from the Trig. Beyond the side track to the Trig, the Western Okataina Walkway continues on to Millar Road.

### OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES

*Picnicing* The beach and grassed area on the shores of Okataina at Tauranganui Bay (Lake Okataina carpark) provide a pleasant picnicing venue alongside the carpark. A nearby public shelter reminds visitors of Ngati Tarawhai's gifting of the Reserve to the Crown.

*Swimming* Take advantage of the wonderful swimming opportunities afforded by the easily accessible bays on the northern and eastern shores of the lake.

*Historic Sites* Okataina is rich in Maori history — please do not disturb pa sites and other historic relics. Timber harvesting within this catchment has left its mark on the bush. Walkers are likely to encounter skid sites and old logging roads.

*Boat Ramps/Jetties* There is a public jetty alongside the boat ramp at Tauranganui Bay. Take care when using the boat ramp (especially for 2WD vehicles) as it is narrow and slippery at times and also prone to accretion of sand after southerly winds.

*Parking* Parking areas are located at all track entry points in the Reserve. Car and boat trailer parking is provided at the Tauranganui Bay boat



## LAKE TARAWERA TRACKS

ramp.

**Toilets** Public toilets are provided at Tauranganui Bay (Lake Okataina carpark).

**Camping** Camping is not permitted within Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve — please use the designated DOC campsite at Humphries Bay on the northern arm of Lake Tarawera. This can be reached via the Eastern Okataina Walkway or the Northern Tarawera Track (refer to Lake Tarawera section). Visitors are asked to limit the duration of their stay to no more than one night. Open fires are prohibited, so take a portable gas cooker. Toilet facilities are provided only at the lakefront and Humphries Bay. This campsite is restricted to visitors arriving by foot or kayak.

**Outdoor Education Centre** The Okataina Outdoor Education Centre is signposted off the main Okataina Road about 3 km away from Lake Okataina. It is an overnight facility used frequently by schools, recreation organisations and tramping clubs. Many walking tracks converge at the Centre. For all enquiries phone 07 348 4005, 7.30am-5.30pm Monday to Friday.

**Lodge Accommodation** Okataina Lodge is located opposite Lake Okataina carpark, overlooking the lake at Tauranganui Bay. For all enquiries phone 07 362 8230.

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping, hunting without a permit.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The landscape around Tarawera was shaped by the 1886 Tarawera eruption, which killed 153 people and raised the surface of the lake by 12m. The lake drains eastward along Tarawera River, surging through the spectacular Tarawera Falls and onward to the coast. There is a trout spawning sanctuary at Tarawera Outlet at the start of the Tarawera River where the trout enjoy clean, clear, free-flowing water. The sanctuary protects the spawning beds from disturbance by anglers, swimmers and boats.

### GETTING THERE

*NOTE: There are two roads beside Lake Tarawera called 'Tarawera Road'. One is a sealed road leading from Rotorua to Spencer Road and the Tarawera community. The other is a private forestry gravel road leading from Kawerau to the Tarawera Outlet campground. For purposes of distinguishing between these two roads in this text, the forestry road will be referred to as 'Tarawera Road (Forestry)', while the sealed road will simply be called 'Tarawera Road'.*

The most direct route from Rotorua to Lake Tarawera is along Tarawera Road (off Te Ngae Road). It is approximately 18 km from Rotorua to Tarawera Landing on the western arm of the lake. Vehicular access to Tarawera Falls and the Outlet is via the town of Kawerau and along private forestry roads.

*Access to Tarawera Falls and Tarawera Outlet (by vehicle):* Access to Tarawera Falls and Tarawera Outlet is from Kawerau township (off SH30 between Rotorua and Whakatane) via private forestry roads. You require an access permit available for \$2.50 from Kawerau Information Centre located in the Filter Photography Shop in Tarawera Court in Kawerau. The permit must be collected on the day of entering the forest roads. Phone 07 323 7550; opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5pm, Saturday 9am - 3pm, Sunday and statutory holidays 9am - 1pm. The forest gate is closed during the hours of darkness. The road may also be closed during periods of high fire risk, so during the summer months it is worth checking with Kawerau Information Centre before you leave. Directions from Kawerau are as follows: when you drive into Kawerau turn off Tamarangi Drive into Islington Street, then turn right onto Onslow Street, left onto Fenton Street, right onto River Road and then left onto Waterhouse Street. You are now on private forestry roads. Follow the instructions signposted as you enter the forest. Remember to turn your headlights on (and don't forget to turn them off when you've arrived at your destination!),

and take care when approaching logging trucks or logging operations. If you're heading to Tarawera Falls, follow Tarawera Road (Forestry) which then becomes Fentons Mill Road, and then turn left onto Waterfall Road. If you're going to Tarawera Outlet remain on Tarawera Road (Forestry).

#### *Access up Mt Tarawera:*

Mt Tarawera is privately owned. The mountain last erupted on 10 June 1886, killing over 150 people and devastating the surrounding landscape. This was New Zealand's largest volcanic eruption in living memory and it plays an important part in the history of Rotorua and New Zealand. Access to the summit is only by Mt Tarawera NZ Ltd guided 4WD half-day tours. For further information contact Mt Tarawera NZ Ltd on 07 349 3714, fax 07 349 3704, or email [mt-tarawera@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mt-tarawera@xtra.co.nz).

#### *Boating Access:*

There are boat ramps and trailer parking at Tarawera Landing, Boatshed Bay, Stony Point and Tarawera Outlet and public jetties at Tarawera Landing, Tarawera Outlet, Boatshed Bay and Rapatu Bay.

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

*Walking* There are three tracks in the Tarawera catchment described below (see also the 'Isthmus Track' section). More detailed land and lake information for the Tarawera area can be obtained from the topographical maps U16 and V16 in the Infomap 260 1:50,000 series.

### **Tarawera Falls Track** (*Waterfall Road carpark to Falls*)

**Grade:** Walking track (easy). Accessible for push-chairs.

**Length:** 0.7 km

**Time:** 20 minutes one way



#### **Special Features:**

The spectacular Tarawera Falls — where water surges out of fissures in a large rock cliff-face surrounded by native bush. The cliff is in fact the end of an ancient rhyolitic lava flow that is believed to have poured from an erupting Mt Tarawera about 11,000 years ago. An abrupt stop to the flow produced these high cliffs. Vegetation here has developed since the 1886 Tarawera eruption. Both pohutukawa and rata are found; an unusual feature is the range of hybrids between these two closely related species that occurs in the area. Evidence of this interbreeding can be seen in the variety of different leaf shapes found on the forest floor here.

#### **Description:**

Follow the track that leaves the carpark heading upstream along the Tarawera River. You will reach a bridge crossing over Tarawera River and the track continues upstream until you arrive at the Falls viewing area. There you can enjoy the splendour of the Falls. Signs at the viewpoint explain the cultural and natural significance of the area. Back-track to return to the carpark or continue along the tramping track to Tarawera Outlet (approximately another 2 hours one way).

*Facilities:* A toilet is located at the carpark. There is a viewing area with a seat at the Falls.

### **Tarawera Outlet to Falls Track**

*NOTE: Due to the steep cliff edges beside the track above the Falls and also because of the fast-flowing and disappearing nature of this river, children should be kept under close supervision at all times.*

**Grade:** Walking track (moderate)

**Length:** 5 km

**Time:** 2 hours one way

#### **Special Features:**

See the Tarawera River disappearing underground at various sites before it re-emerges through the spectacular Tarawera Falls through narrow fissures in a fractured rhyolite lava cliff.

#### **Description:**

The track begins at the Tarawera Outlet swingbridge. Cross the bridge and take the right hand track at the junction. The track meanders through the native bush, largely following the river. Caution is advised for those wishing to swim in the river beside this track, due to underwater currents and the nature of the river. However, there is a safe and popular swimming spot approximately 1 1/2 hours from the Outlet, at a wider and shallower stretch of the river where the water runs more gently. Shortly afterwards, the track divides for a brief distance before both tracks rejoin. The track then zigzags down a steep escarpment to a viewing area at the base of the Falls. The Waterfall Road carpark is a short 20 minute walk past the Falls. For those wanting to picnic beside the river, there is a beautiful spot just 100m back along Waterfall Road from the carpark.

*Facilities:* Toilets are located at Tarawera Outlet and at the Tarawera Falls carpark. There is a viewing area with a seat at the Falls.

### **Northern Tarawera Track**

*(Tarawera Outlet to Humphries Bay).*

Grade: Tramping track (moderate)

Length: 6 km

Time: 3 hours one way

**Special Features:**

This area was extensively altered by the 1886 Tarawera eruption, and the landscape is being slowly regenerated by native plant species.

**Description:**

The track begins at the Tarawera Outlet swingbridge. Cross the bridge and take the left hand track at the junction. The track passes a jetty a short distance from the Outlet and progresses westward. Views of the lake become less frequent as the track climbs inland. The track descends into Humphries Bay — a pleasant picnic and overnight camping area. Trampers can then take the Eastern Okataina Walkway northwards to access Otangimoana Bay on Lake Okataina (approximately 20 minutes one way) or onwards to complete the Walkway at the Okataina carpark (Tauranganui Bay — a further 2 hours and forty minutes walk).

**Facilities:**

Camping facilities and toilets are provided at Tarawera Outlet and Humphries Bay. Camping is permitted at Tarawera Outlet and Humphries Bay.

*Picnic Areas* Numerous picnicing spots around the lake can be accessed by boat. Tarawera Outlet, Hot Water Beach and Humphries Bay are some of the more popular picnic areas. Tarawera Landing, Stony Point and Boatshed Bay can be accessed by vehicle.

*Swimming* The lake is well known for providing a refreshing swim as the water seems to remain cooler than other lakes in the district.

*Hot Springs* Hot Water Beach, on the southern shores of Lake Tarawera, has natural hot springs under the sand — ideal for a relaxing, warm swim. Caution: There are localised patches of very hot sand!

*Historic Sites* Tarawera Orchard, at Punaromia, contains a site of traditional Maori painting on a rock face. Access is through a gate at Tarawera Landing. Follow the track for 5 minutes and the paintings are visible on your left. Please do not disturb this archaeological site.

*Boat Ramps* There are boat ramps at Tarawera Landing, Boatshed Bay, Stony Point and Tarawera Outlet.

*Jetties* Public jetties are located at Tarawera Landing, Tarawera Outlet, Boatshed Bay

and Rapatu Bay.

*Toilets* Public toilets are provided at most boating access points and camping areas.

*Camping* Camping is not permitted within Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve except at the three designated Conservation campsite areas around Lake Tarawera: Tarawera Outlet, Hot Water Beach and Humphries Bay. Open fires are strictly prohibited at all camping areas and throughout all of Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve — therefore campers are advised to use portable gas cookers.

- **Tarawera Outlet campsite** is a large and popular self registration camping area. Fees are \$7 per adult and \$2 per child per night. Children under 5 years old camp free. This camping area is accessible by car, on foot and by boat. Facilities include toilets, a cooking shelter, reticulated water supply and a boat ramp. There are information panels, and an interpretation panel on Mount Tarawera's vegetation succession.
- **Hot Water Beach campsite** is a popular self-registration camping area. Fees are \$8 per adult and \$4 per child per night. Children under 5 years old camp free. This camping area is accessible by boat only. Facilities include formed tent sites, toilets and a cooking shelter (with limited water supply). The camp is often over-crowded during peak holiday periods (especially Christmas/New Year and the opening of the trout fishing season) so if you are unable to find a camp site then try Tarawera Outlet.
- **Humphries Bay campsite** is a small, informal camping area at the northern arm of Lake Tarawera. The campsite is accessible on foot or by boat, and camping is restricted to visitors arriving on foot or by kayak only. Visitors are asked to limit the duration of their stay to no more than one night. Toilet facilities are provided.

## RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping outside of designated areas, hunting without a permit.

## ISTHMUS TRACK

### SIGNIFICANCE

Lake Rotomahana was internationally famous for its spectacular Pink and White Terraces which were destroyed in the Mount Tarawera eruption of 1886. Steaming cliffs and silica terraces still remain as a feature of this lake. The lake and surrounding margins are a wildlife refuge protecting many species of water fowl. The lake is closed to powerboats in May for the birds' breeding season. Many rare ferns and orchids are found within the thermal areas.

### GETTING THERE

Lake Rotomahana is located 26 km south-east of Rotorua. Most visitors access Lake Rotomahana through Waimangu Volcanic Valley (Waimangu Road, off SH 5). Visitors boating on Lake Tarawera often tie up at Rapatu Bay and walk to Lake Rotomahana over the Isthmus track. Note: The steaming cliffs are not visible from this track. The Isthmus track is also a portage route between lakes for kayakers.

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES / FACILITIES

#### *Walks*

#### **Isthmus Track**

Grade: Walking track (easy)

Length: 1.2 km

Time: 20 minutes one way

Special Features:

The area is dominated by majestic Mount Tarawera.

Description:

The track links Lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana and is an integral part of the Waimangu 'Round Trip'.

#### *Waimangu Volcanic Valley*

This is the main entrance for visitors to Lake Rotomahana. Entry fees apply. Self-guided walks and launch trips on Lake Rotomahana and Lake Tarawera are available. All enquiries to Waimangu Thermal Valley, Waimangu Road, Rotorua, phone 07 366 6137.

#### *The Round Trip*

A full day trip from Rotorua to Waimangu, then down the thermal valley. Take the launch across Lake Rotomahana and walk across the Isthmus to Lake Tarawera where another launch delivers you to Tarawera Landing. Contact Waimangu Volcanic Valley, phone 07 366 6137.

#### *Rotomahana Launch Trip*

Having walked down the Waimangu Thermal Valley, an

option is a 1/2 hour launch trip around the thermal sites and wonders of Lake Rotomahana.

#### *Geothermal features*

There are numerous hot water springs around the lake edge and the ground is often hot and unstable. For this reason you are strongly advised not to walk around the lake.

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Lake Tarawera Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping outside of designated areas, hunting without a permit.

# RAINBOW MOUNTAIN TRACKS

## SIGNIFICANCE

Rainbow Mountain's Maori name is *Maungakakamea*, meaning mountain of coloured earth. It is easily recognised by its coloured slopes and its unusual rounded knob on the top, known as *Tihi-o-Rua*, 'the owl's perch'. From its volcanic origins the mountain has cooled over recent years, although in places it is still visibly smouldering. Consequently, the native vegetation is slowly regenerating.

Rainbow Mountain is significant in botanical and scientific terms, containing a complex mixture of plant species, some of which are rare and unique to geothermal areas. On the opposite side of the highway, Lake Ngahewa supports a variety of birdlife: tui, bellbird, waxeyes and kingfishers are abundant in the vegetation, while a variety of waterfowl is found on the lake.

*NOTE: This is an active geothermal area — refer to pg 3 about Geothermal Hazards.*

## GETTING THERE

Rainbow Mountain lies 26 km south-east of Rotorua, beside SH 5 (the Rotorua-Taupo highway). Approaching from Rotorua, the carpark for the walking tracks is situated just past the turnoff for SH 38 (the Murupara/Waikaremoana highway), on the left-hand side of the road.

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES/FACILITIES

### Walks

#### Crater Lakes Walk

Grade: Walking track (easy).

Length: 1 km

Time: 15 minutes one way

#### Special Features:

Crater lakes and steaming cliffs. An interpretation panel on geothermal vegetation.

#### Description:

From the carpark, follow the signs. There are great views over two explosion crater lakes that are set against a backdrop of bare brown, orange and red steaming cliffs and an array of geothermal vegetation.

#### Summit Track

Grade: Tramping track (moderate)

Length: 2.5 km

Time: 1½ hours from the crater lakes to the summit.

#### Special Features:

Steaming, rainbow-coloured rocks; native vegetation; great views over the region.

#### Description:

After taking in the sights of the two craters, continue north and upwards through regenerating native vegetation and past the bare, coloured and steaming ridges. There are regular opportunities for good views over the surrounding countryside, but to get the complete 360° you need to continue on up to the summit. Approximately 1½ hours from the crater lakes, the summit road is reached — watch out for the occasional vehicle as you proceed the remaining 10 minutes to the very top. From here you can see Mt Tarawera; Lakes Tarawera, Rotomahana and Rerewhakaaitu to the north; the Paeroa Range to the west; the Urewera Ranges and Kaimanawa Forest to the east; and Mt Tauhara, Lake Taupo and the volcanic peaks of Tongariro National Park to the south.

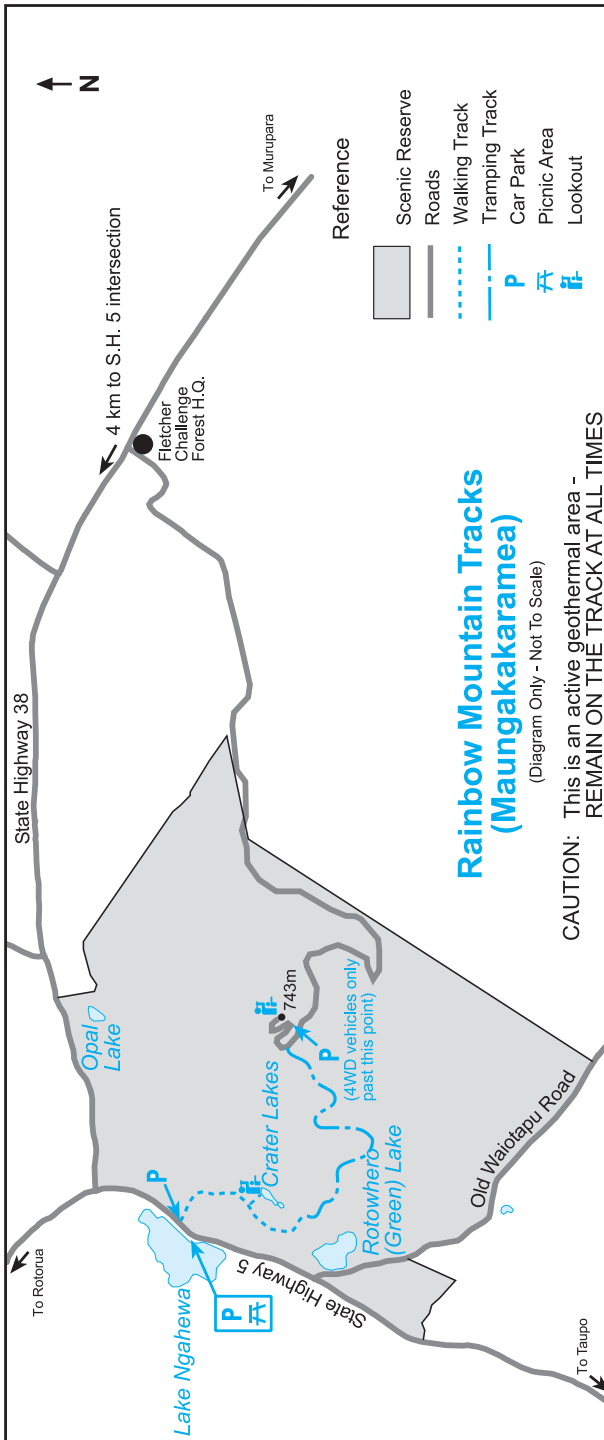
#### Road to the Summit

Kaingaroa Timberlands maintain a road to the summit of Rainbow Mountain which is open during daytime hours. Visitors should make use of the small car parking space just before the summit, as the rest of this section of road is only suitable for 4 wheel drive vehicles. Access information can be gained from Kaingaroa Timberland's Waiotapu office at Rainbow Mountain on SH 38 (phone 07 366 1000).

## RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Rainbow Mountain Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping, hunting.

## LAKE REREWHAKAAITU CAMP SITES



### SIGNIFICANCE

Lake Rerewhakaaitu is registered by DOC as a site of special wildlife interest. This is due to the presence of breeding areas for large numbers of water-birds. The lake supports a breeding population of dabchicks, scaup and the largest breeding population of banded dotterel in the Rotorua Ecological District. The wetland area of Pukekahu Bay possesses an unusually large area of tall spike rush. The lake itself has some special qualities, with its highly irregular shoreline and actively forming spit. With the main body of the lake reaching an average depth of only 6 m, it is one of the shallowest lakes in the region.

### GETTING THERE

Lake Rerewhakaaitu is located approximately 29 km south-east of Rotorua. Vehicle access is off SH 5 (the Rotorua-Taupo highway) and then SH 38. Off SH 38 the roads to follow are Rerewhakaaitu Road, Brett Road and Ash Pit Road.

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

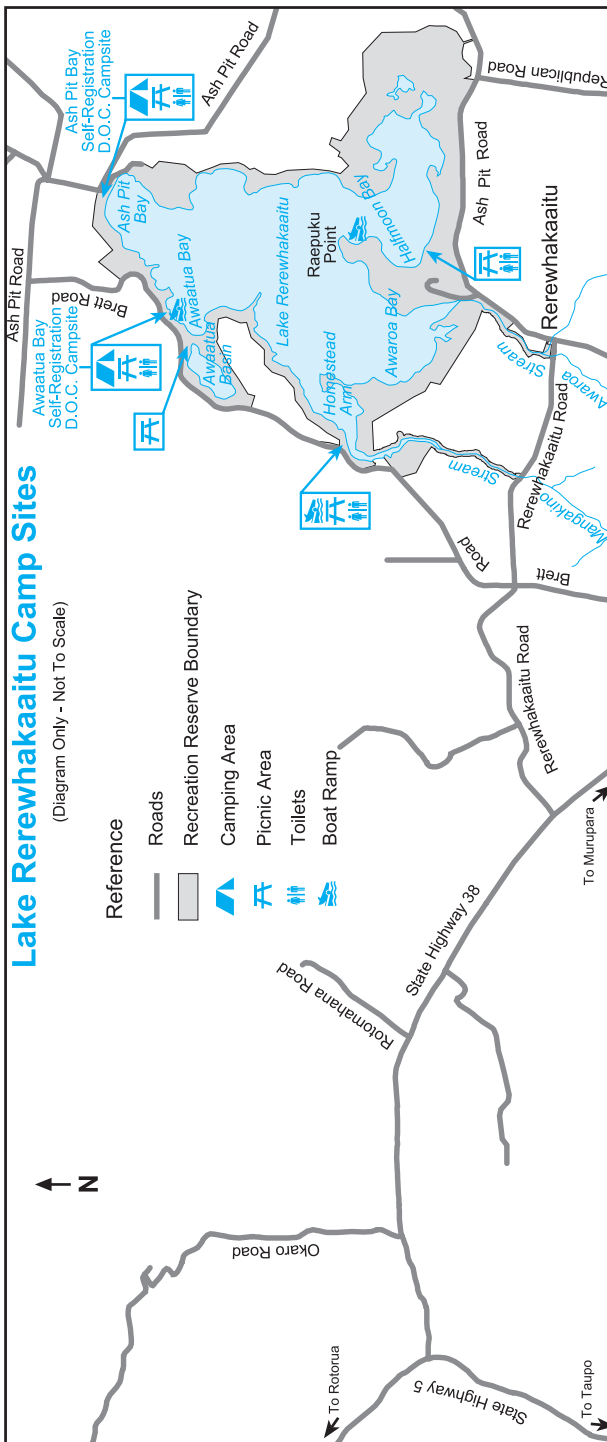
*More detailed land and lake information for the Rerewhakaaitu area can be obtained from the topographical map V16 in the Infomap 260 1:50,000 series.*

#### Camping

There are two DOC campsites around Lake Rerewhakaaitu: *Ash Pit Bay* campsite and *Awaatua Bay* campsite. Both campsites are self-registration, and operate on a first-come, first-served basis. The fees are \$6 per adult and \$2 per child per night (children under 5 years old camp free). Lake water is the only water source, so it is advisable to bring a personal supply of drinking water. Composting toilets are provided at the campsites. Open fires are prohibited — please use portable gas cookers. There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish away with you. Dogs are allowed at these campsites, but they must be under control at all times (in accordance with local dog control by-laws).

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Rerewhakaaitu Recreation Reserve: open fires, removal of plants or animals. Dogs must be under control at all times.



## BLUE LAKE TRACK

### SIGNIFICANCE

The Blue Lake (*Lake Tikitapu*) is one of the closest lakes to Rotorua, and is extremely popular with water skiers, swimmers and boaties. The clear blue waters are encompassed by an easy walking track which takes in beautiful beaches, native bush and the exotic conifers of Whakarewarewa Forest. This natural environment supports a wide variety of birdlife.

### GETTING THERE

Blue Lake is situated 9 km south-east of Rotorua, via Te Ngae Road then Tarawera Road.

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

#### Walks

##### Blue Lake Track

Grade: Walking track (easy)

Length: 5.5 km

Time: 2 hours

#### Special features:

Native bush and quiet beaches. Good opportunities to look out over the Blue Lake (Tikitapu) and Green Lake (Rotokakahi).

#### Description:

This is a circuit track around Blue Lake which passes through both native and exotic forest. The track begins at the north-western corner of the Blue Lake reserve, at the far end of the beach. After walking along a 1 km lake-edge section of the Blue Lake Scenic Reserve, the track continues on through Kaingaroa Timberlands' Whakarewarewa Forest and then into District Council reserve, before emerging onto Tarawera Road. Care should be taken along this final roadside section back to the beach, particularly with children. For longer excursions into Whakarewarewa Forest contact the Redwood Grove Visitor Centre on Long Mile Road (phone 07 350 0110).

### FACILITIES

*Boat Ramp* At the northern end of the lake.

*Picnic Areas* The Blue Lake beaches and surrounding grassed areas are all popular for summer picnics. Facilities include toilets, rubbish bins, a children's playground, barbecues and a dog exercise and swimming area.

**Swimming** The broad pumice-sand beach provides a safe swimming area, and the water slide is always a favourite with children.

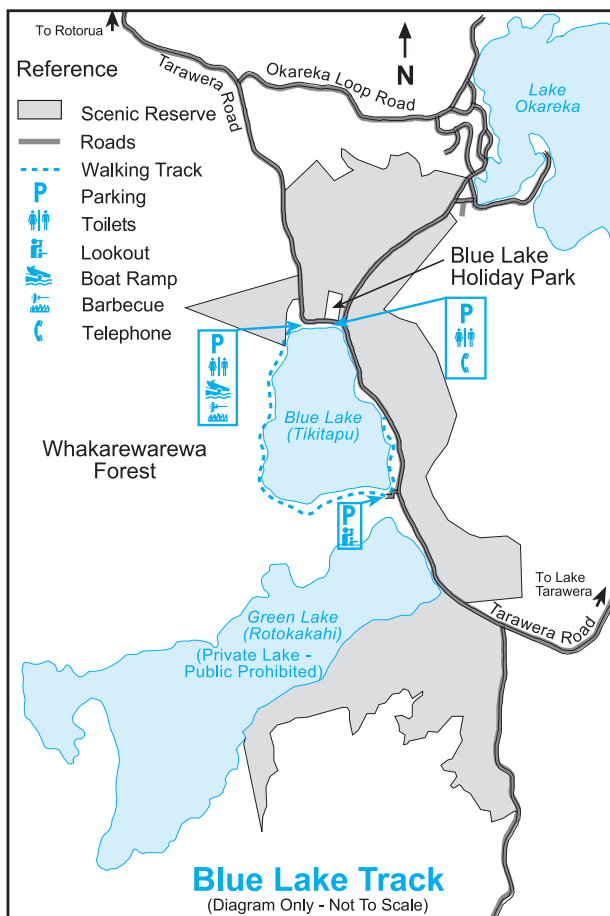
**Lookout Point** On the south-western corner of the lake there is a good lookout point over Lakes Tikitapu and Rotokakahi.

**Accommodation** The Blue Lake Top 10 Holiday Park on Tarawera Road overlooks the lake. The camp provides many facilities, including a shop and public telephone. Phone 07 362 8120.

## RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Blue Lake Scenic Reserve: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, camping, hunting.

**NOTE:** Dogs on leashes are permitted on the walkway track around the lake.



## MOKAIHAHA TRACK

### SIGNIFICANCE

Rich in Maori history, Mokaihaha Ecological Area contains several trails once used by Maori passing on their way to Rotorua from the Waikato. It is also an area with high conservation and scientific values, and possesses the largest surviving block of the once extensive native forests that covered the Mamaku Plateau. Podocarp trees such as rimu, miro and matai are plentiful and the forest floor is thick with healthy regeneration. Birdlife includes tui, kereru, bellbird and fantail. A population of kaka (native parrot) has been known to delight walkers with their appearance and song, and the endangered kokako may be heard in the dawn chorus. Short-tailed bats are also present in the area.

### GETTING THERE

Mokaihaha Ecological Area is situated on the Mamaku Plateau, 9.6 km south-east of Mamaku township. From Rotorua follow SH 5 (the main Rotorua-Hamilton highway) for 1 km. Turn left up Dansey Road to Mamaku. At the end of this road turn left by Mamaku School and follow South Road for 9.6 km until you reach the track sign on the right (west) side of the road. This is the start of the Rotohokahoka Track, which ends at West Road.

West Road is found approximately 3 km further down South Road. Due to its rough surface and particularly in wet weather, it is recommended only for 4 wheel-drive vehicles.

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

#### Walks

*More detailed land and lake information for the Mokaihaha Ecological Area can be obtained from the topographical map U16 in the Infomap 260 1:50,000 series.*

#### Rotohokahoka Track

Grade: Tramping track (moderate)  
Length: 4 km  
Time: 2 hours (Rotohokahoka to West Road)

#### Special Features:

Large podocarps and a chance to hear kaka and other native birdlife.

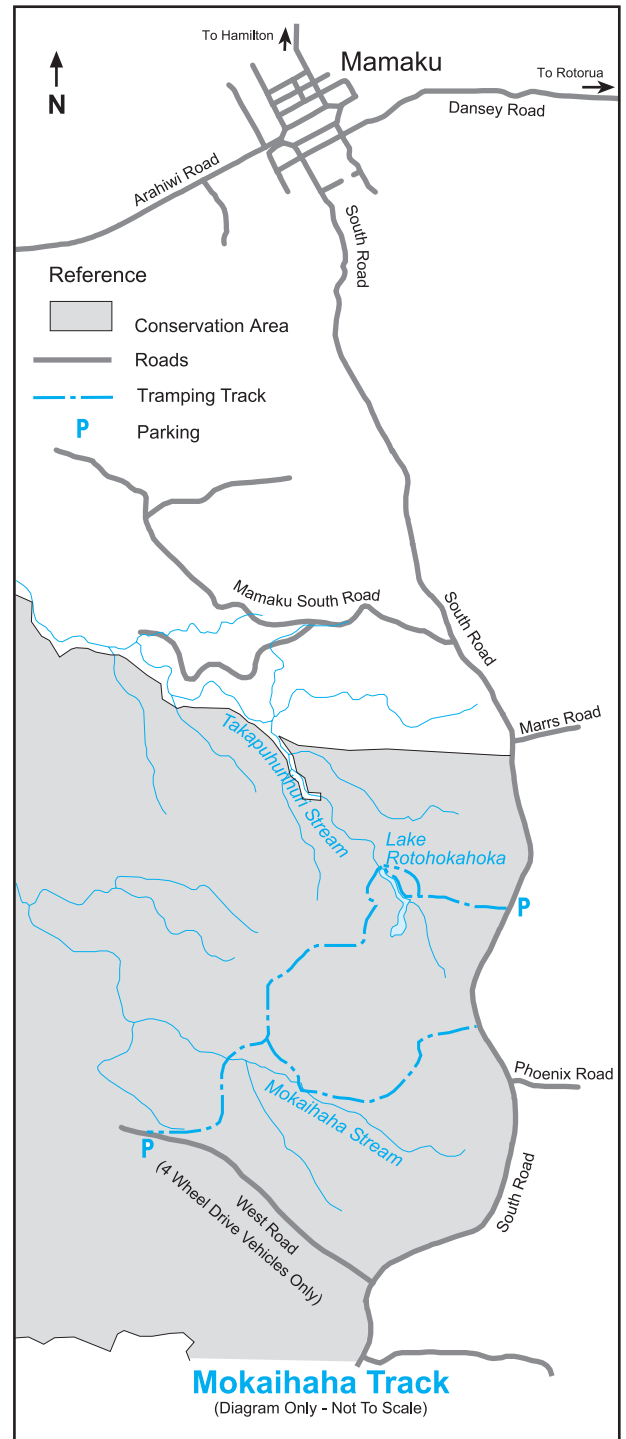
#### Description:

The track from the South Road carpark leads to Lake Rotohokahoka (20 minutes) and West Road (2 hours). Ten minutes walk from the carpark, the track divides; both tracks lead down to the lake and connect up again. The main track then continues past the lake and towards West Road. Along this section of the track there is an option of

taking a signposted side-track off to your left, which after 30 minutes will bring you back out onto South Road, approximately 15 minutes walk from the South Road carpark.

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Mokaihaha Ecological Area: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, hunting without a permit.



# MANGOREWA TRACK

## SIGNIFICANCE

This track is set within the Mangorewa Ecological Area — an area with high conservation and scientific values. The forest is a fine example of lowland podocarp forest and one of the few areas left unlogged on the Mamaku Plateau. Largely unmodified, the forest contains fine examples of rimu, red beech, tawa, kamahi and tawari. There is also a good diversity of birdlife, including kaka, robins, whiteheads, kereru, tui, fantails and the small brown kiwi.

The Tauranga Direct Road, which this ecological area adjoins, has an interesting history. It was formed in 1869 as part of a central North Island military road that linked Napier, Taupo, Rotorua and Tauranga. The Rotorua/Tauranga section took 10 hours by coach and a watering trough still remains as a sign of these times.

## GETTING THERE

Mangorewa Ecological Area lies 20 km north of Rotorua on the western side of the Tauranga Direct Road. Coming from Rotorua, the track begins on the left-hand side of the road, immediately after the third one-way road bridge and just after the Ohaupara Stream. There is a small parking area on the opposite side of the road from the track entrance — extreme care should be taken when entering or exiting this carpark, due to lack of sight of cars coming in either direction. An alternative carpark (with safer entry and exit points) is provided just before the second one-way road-bridge, on the left-hand side of the road.

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

### Walks

#### Mangorewa Track

**Grade:** Route (moderate/hard) — due to dense forest, several stream crossings and sparse track markers. Recommended for the experienced only.

**Length:** 9 km

**Time:** 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours

#### Special Features:

The track passes through a fine example of lowland forest, one of the few areas left unlogged on the Mamaku Plateau.

#### Description:

From the parking area the track leads directly to the Ohaupara Stream and a crossing is required. After travelling along the track and crossing the stream several more times, the track climbs away onto a ridge. What is

commonly known as Sardine Can Junction is reached after 1 hour. Take the left fork and the track descends a spur to a small stream. From here you climb for 1 hour to reach an open camping area. Note that the nearest water source is 30 minutes away (the Mangorewa River). Continue on past the camp for another half an hour and you will reach the Mangorewa River. You can either return the way you came or walk back via the Mangorewa River. This extremely slippery downstream walk is only suitable for the experienced trumper who is wearing tramping boots, and when the river level is low. Allow 3 hours from the point where you first reach the Mangorewa River to the carpark. Walkers should take extreme care walking beside this river, as the rocks are very wet and slippery, and there are numerous deep potholes to avoid. It is also necessary to cross the river on several occasions. Putting an old spare pair of woollen socks over your tramping boots provides a better grip over the slippery wet rocks. Leave the river bed via the right hand bank just before the road bridge. This is the site of one of the carparks. To reach the other carpark, cross the bridge and walk down the road until you reach the other carpark. Take care walking this stretch of the road, as there is little space for pedestrians and two single lane bridges to negotiate.

## RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Mangorewa Ecological Area: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal or plants or animals, hunting without a permit.

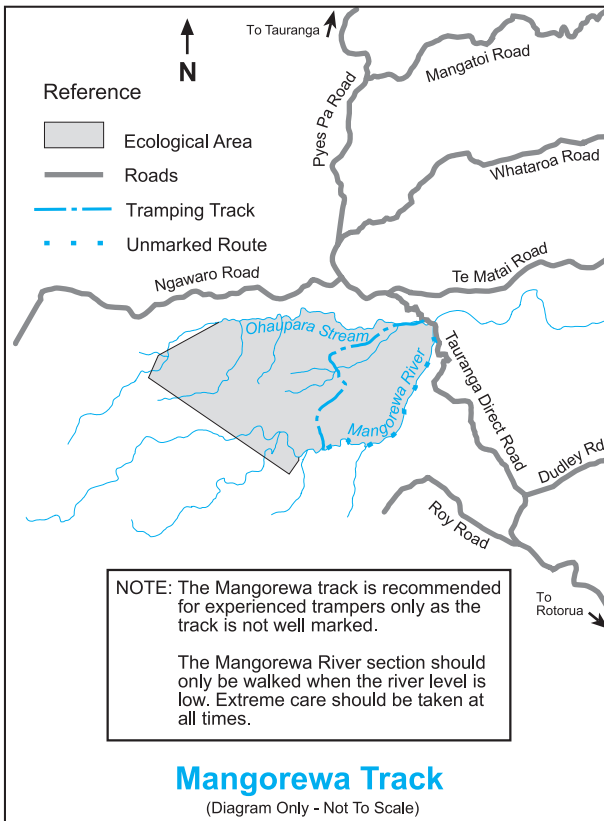
## KAHAROA KOKAKO TRACK

### SIGNIFICANCE

Kaharoa Conservation Area and the adjoining Onaia Ecological Area are renowned for their kokako. Unique to NZ, kokako were once common in lowland forest throughout NZ, but are today listed as an endangered species with less than 1400 surviving in the North Island. There is only a remote chance that the South Island variety still exists. Kokako belong to an ancient family of birds which includes the tieke (saddleback) and the extinct huia. They are similar in size to a small domestic pigeon and their feathers are a uniform steely grey. They have a distinctive black beak and legs, and a mask of black feathers around their eyes. Their most striking feature is their cobalt-blue wattles, which extend from either side of their beak to meet under their chin. They are arguably our most beautiful songster, communicating with a variety of sounds including clicks, buzzes and mews. To hear their song at dawn is an experience not easily forgotten. Although kokako are not particularly good at flying, their short rounded wings and powerful legs are well adapted for life within the forest canopy. Their ability to leap, run, and glide through the trees, and their diet of insects, fruit and leaves has caused them to be described as 'avian squirrels'. This is a fair comparison, as kokako evolved to fill an ecological niche that in many countries would be occupied by mammals such as squirrels, monkeys or possums. Since European colonisation, kokako numbers have decreased dramatically and their continuing decline is mainly due to the effects of introduced predators such as possums and rats. These animals affect kokako directly by preying on their eggs and nestlings, and indirectly by competing with them for food.

Over the past few years in the Kaharoa Conservation Area and Onaia Ecological Area, the considerable efforts of the Kaharoa Kokako Trust, DOC, Environment BOP and many volunteers have been rewarded with an increase in population size of the kokako and a general increase in the health of the forest. This is set to continue into the future.

This area is also significant for its impressive diversity of plant and bird species, despite its past history of fire and logging. As well as the kokako, the area supports good populations of tui, bellbirds (makomako), whiteheads (popokatea), robins (toutouwai), ruru (morepork), kereru and even a small population of North Island brown kiwi. Tree species present in the area include rimu, totara, kohekohe, tawa, pukatea, rewarewa, mahoe, kamahi, nikau and mamaku. The deep gorges within the area provide sanctuary for the rare fern, para (kingfern).



## GETTING THERE

Kaharoa Conservation Area and Onaia Ecological Area are situated approximately 36 km north of Rotorua. From Rotorua, access is via Hamurana Road, then the Tauranga Direct Road, Kaharoa Road, and finally Kapukapu Road (see map). There is a carpark beside a DOC sign, 0.7 km from the end of Kapukapu Road. The track begins 15 minutes walk down the road from the carpark. (Note: There is limited parking space available at the track entrance.) Note: Although this is a quiet, dead-end road, children should be supervised as there is no pavement and several blind corners.

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES

### Walks

**Kokako Track** (also known as the **Hollows Track**)

Grade: Walking track (easy-moderate)

Length: 1.2 km

Time: 45 minutes each way

### Special Features:

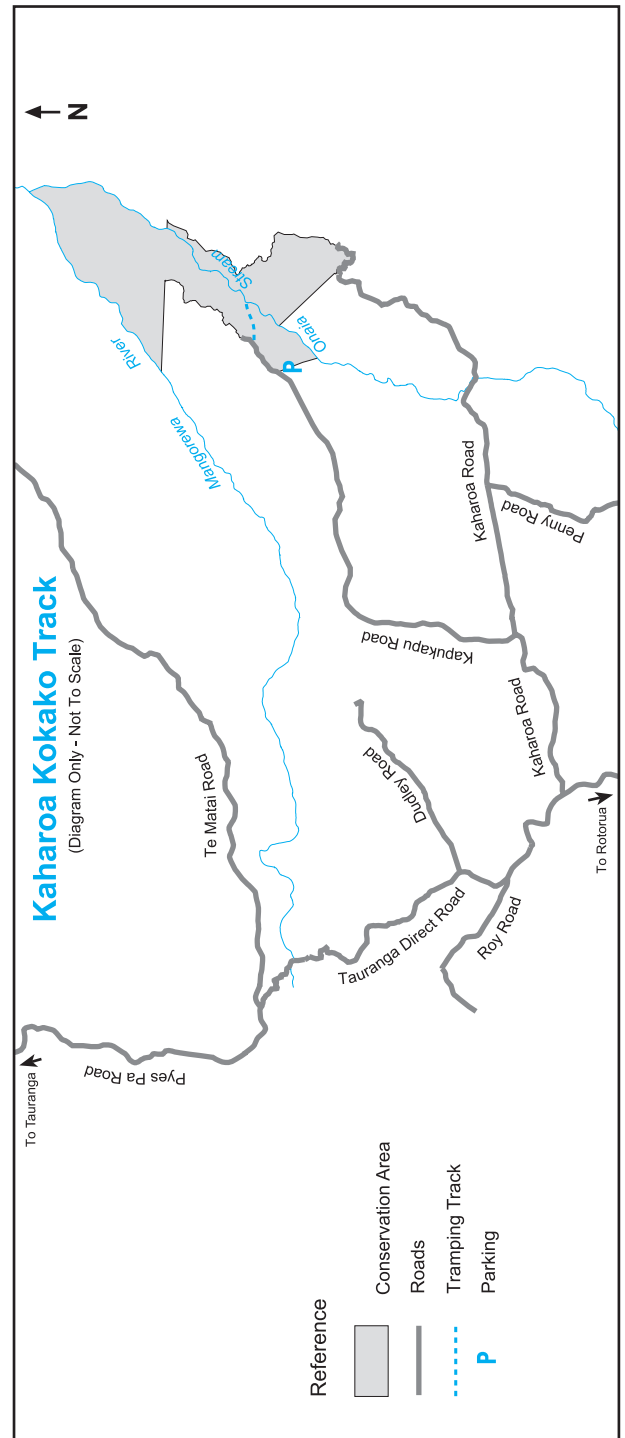
A great opportunity to hear the kokako's dawn chorus. Several kokako territories are within close range of this track, and there is a chance you may even see one hopping or gliding around high up in the canopy. Great range of tree species line the track, and a variety of other bird species may also be heard. There is a public shelter at the carpark with some interpretation panels on the area and its kokako.

### Description:

The track meanders its way down through some beautiful forest to Onaia Stream. This is a tranquil and secluded spot, ideal for a picnic or breakfast stop after listening to the dawn chorus! The return journey is back along the same track.

## RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted within Kaharoa Conservation Area or Onaia Ecological Area: dogs, horses, vehicles (including bicycles and motorbikes), fires, removal of plants or animals, hunting without a permit.



## TE WAIHOU WALKWAY



### SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this area lies in its scenic beauty and cultural history. Te Waihou Walkway lies alongside the upper reaches of the Waihou River, where the water is extremely clear and pure, with an intense blue hue. The Walkway's charm is further enhanced by interesting geological formations and areas of native bush which frame the river and its clear, still pools and waterfalls. The Waihou River is fed by many springs and from tributary streams in the Mamaku ranges. Water flows from the Blue Spring at a rate of 42 cubic metres per minute (9240 gallons per minute). The Blue Spring is internationally acclaimed, with water from the Mamaku Plateau taking over 100 years to reach it. During this long residence time in aquifers, particles and light-absorbing matter are effectively removed from the water, leaving it with a very high clarity and characteristic blue-green colour. The water is sold in service stations around New Zealand and supplies the local town of Putaruru, with no treatment necessary before distribution.

With its source as far up as the Ngatira Marae, the Waihou River significantly marks the eastern boundary of "Raukawa Ki Te Kaokaoroa o Patetere" and therefore the northern boundary of the Ngati Raukawa. The river was the main travelling route of King Te Wherowhero Tawhiao, the second Maori King of New Zealand, and was a great source of food and flax.

Another historical figure to use the Waihou River as a travelling route was Kahupeka, a Tainui tupuna. She set off with her son shortly after her husband's death, to wander around the Central North Island. On her travels, the Upper Waihou River was one of the main rivers that she and her son crossed while travelling from Pirongia to Te Aroha, and again from Te Aroha to Whakamaru.

More recently the Edmeades family settled and began to farm the land along the Upper Waihou River in 1938. At this stage the river area was heavily covered with fern and ti tree, which was eventually cleared. War trenches were dug alongside the Upper Waihou River around this time, but were later covered in without ever being used.

### GETTING THERE

From Rotorua, drive on SH5 west towards Tirau. Take the Putaruru turning on Whites Road (SH28). The downstream entrance at the Whites Road layby is just past Leslie Road. The Blue Spring end is 3.6km along Leslie Road.

## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES & FACILITIES:

### Walks



### Te Waihou Walkway

Grade: Walking Track (easy grade for most of the track, though with numerous stiles and some hilly sections).

Length: 4.7 km (one way) plus 0.5 km loop track.

Time: 1 1/2 hours (one way).

### Special features:

The Blue Spring and the river's beautiful clear, blue water; native forest remnants and restoration plantings; a hidden water wheel at the entrance to the gorge; deep still pools and calm stretches of the river suitable for swimming, tubing, kayaking or snorkelling in summer (wetsuits recommended!).

Large grassed areas are suitable for picnicing and a viewing platform provides views of the Blue Spring from across the river.

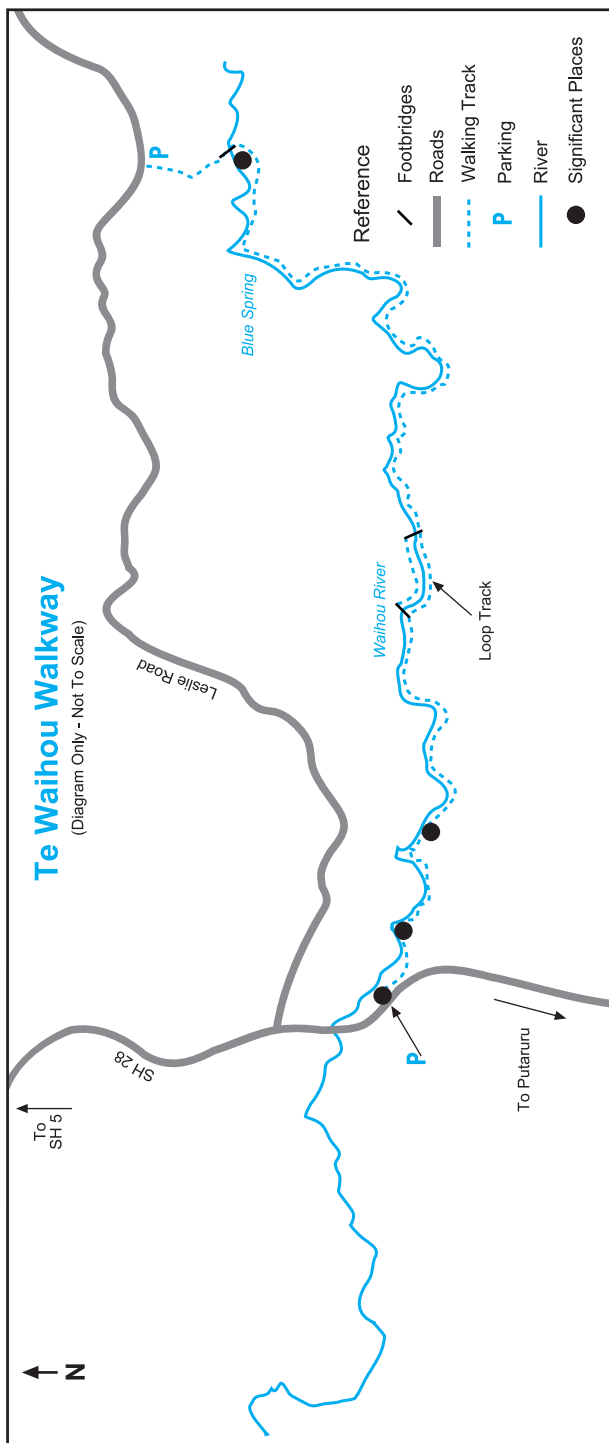
### Description:

The walkway ranges from easy walking to steeper areas in places with stiles and steps, with boardwalk/wobbly walks constructed through wetland areas. A loop track provides views over a stunning area of the river and access to the northern bank via two footbridges. The walk goes through areas of restoration and regeneration of wetland and native plantings, and crosses rolling pastoral land beside the river. The river's mood changes several times as you progress along the Walkway, from clear and tranquil in the wider sections to white and noisy in the gorge area. Small waterfalls set amongst native bush add to the excitement, and trout are plentiful. There are a number of information panels along the walkway explaining heritage sites. A Bioloos toilet is located roughly halfway along the walkway.

Hazards such as waterfalls, electric fences and livestock may be encountered on this walkway. Please take reasonable care.

### RESTRICTIONS

The following are NOT permitted along Te Waihou Walkway: crossing fences onto private property, fires, removal of plants or animals, disturbance of wildlife or stock, damage to the environment, littering, vehicles (other than by prior arrangement with South Waikato District Council (07) 886 1729). Trout fishing regulations apply.



## CONTACT ADDRESSES

### TOURISM ROTORUA

Fenton Street, Rotorua. Phone/Fax: 07 348 5179

Open every day except Christmas Day from 8am to 5.30pm.

For DOC visitor information, brochures about tracks and campsites, and hut tickets.

Also information on scenic attractions, accommodation and sightseeing options. Public toilets and cafeteria available. Coin and card telephones available 24 hours.

### DOC — Rotorua Lakes Area Office

14-16 Scott Street, PO Box 281, Rotorua

Phone: 07 348 3610

Fax: 07 349 3690

Website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Open Monday to Friday: 8.00am-4.30pm

Work base for the Rangers.

*Check out the guide to the BOP outdoors "Destination Outdoors" - on their website*  
[www.destinationoutdoors.co.nz](http://www.destinationoutdoors.co.nz)

