

HERETAUNGA TRAMPING CLUB (INC.)

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'P O H O K U R A'

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CLUB TRIPS

SHUTEYE SHACK - ARMSTRONG - BUTTERCUP HOLLOW

17 April 1983

No. 1270

The day dawned clear and mild as we headed for the Central Ruahines and a personal pilgrimage for me to Shuteye Shack.

That first tramp I went on in 1957 with Norm and Cath Elder, and the school party was my introduction to tramping. The day was not to let me down, but the evening - that is another story.

At Triplex base the club divided into fast and slow parties, the fast party to go from Armstrong Saddle over 66 and 65 to the Waipawa Saddle and down the Waipawa River. Leading from behind, the slow party headed up through typical pretty Ruahine bush to stop at Shuteye Shack for photos and a bite to eat.

Shuteye was a I remembered it 26 years ago except the door shelter had gone, along with the dead opossum Peter Manning had draped over it after stabbing it with a bayonet.

We carried on to the accompaniment of voices from above as the younger members of the fast group had stopped at Buttercup Hollow and the all new, all wood Shuteye Chalet. The view from around the hut was magnificent and we spent a very pleasant lunch time sitting in the sun. We crossed Armstrong Saddle with the intention of dropping down a shingle slide into Triplex. Karen and Jim Glass must have been that way before as they left us to our own devices and returned down the track.

While the shingle slide was a lot of fun, the stream at the bottom was decidedly serious. It was very, very slippery! We finally arrived at Triplex stream and enjoyed the wide open bed down to the track back through the bush to the truck.

Now the story really begins. The diff on the truck had been jumping out on the way up and as we started back home the diff really began to jump. After two stops to disconnect the electric unit, Selwyn tried his hand at the wheel but to no avail. Two farmhouse telephone calls and a final try at driving and it was all over. We parked at the side of the road in a beautiful autumn evening miles from anywhere. "Stoup" was in the menu and the gas stove was put to good use. The Stoup was delicious. Finally the Arataki truck arrived with Gerald at the wheel and a tow was decided on. The trip went well until some twit following kept flashing his lights and when we stopped we found two Bedford Mini buses to take all the happy travellers home. We finally arrived home at 10.25, over five hours on the road.

Leader: Geoff Robinson

No. in party: 19

Karen and Jim Glass, Peter Berry, Heather, Selwyn, Michael and Sarah Hawthorne, Geoff Robinson, Lew Harrison, Clive Thurston, Raymond Lowe, Pedro de Treend, Russell Perry, five H.B.H.S., Eva Vines.

EASTER WEEKEND - THE WHAKATANE RIVER TRIP THAT DIDN'T - A

1 - 3 April 1983

No. 1271

The intention of the trip was to do some tramping in the Whakatane River area, but due to strong advice that it wasn't safe to leave one's car in this area and having no driver for the truck, it was decided to do other tramps in the Waikaremoana area.

Ross, Robyn, John Berry and Keith decided to do a slow tramp around Lake Waikaremoana and do a spot of fishing along the way.

The rest of us decided to tramp up to Lake Waikareiti then around the Lake to Sandy Bay.

We left Hastings at six o'clock Friday morning in four vehicles. When we arrived, we changed, signed in at the Park Headquarters and set off in our three small groups.

The weather on Friday was quite pleasant, the track very easy going and quite a lot of bird life about. We arrived at Sandy Bay at about three o'clock and decided to spend the night there instead of going on and having to pitch a tent.

The next morning didn't look too good when we started and slowly it deteriorated until there was a freezing wind blowing and the rain was teeming down. We tramped around to the far side of the tundra before we decided to turn back for Sandy Bay. That afternoon we did a map and compass exercise and bushbashed through to the next bay.

The following morning (Sunday) the weather was still very windy and unpleasant, so we decided to tramp back out to Headquarters and hire a row boat. Unfortunately when we got around to the day shelter the wind was so strong that it was forming white caps on the Lake, making it very unsafe to take a boat out.

From the shelter we tramped back to Headquarters, had a look inside, then made our way back home, thus cutting our four day weekend down to three days of tramping.

Leader: Lee Barrett

No. in party: 9

Lee Barrett, Clive Thurston, Peter Berry, Peter Scarborough, Selwyn, Heather, Michael and Sarah Hawthorne and Sarahs friend.

EASTER WEEKEND - LAKE WAIKAREMOANA - B

1 - 3 April 1983

On our arrival to Aniwaniwa we had a short discussion on where to go, and after some thought four of us decided to go around the lake.

We were given a ride by another H.T.C. member and were soon waving goodbye to the sound of 'pikers'. After a false start at Hopuruhine landing we picked up the track and set off with great style through the bush and ferns in windy but fine weather.

All the huts were full to overflowing so we camped out with the Moroporks. The first night we spent about half an hour past Te Puna. Next day had an early start and went right through to Waiopaoa where we again slept out.

Sunday was very windy and showery as we set out for Panekiri. We had intended to stay the night there but the hut was full of people and the tank water dried up (except spring water which had to be boiled), so we toiled on to the roadhead where we got a lift back to our car.

There we found a note that the others had had a shower half-way in to Waikareiti and had turned back and gone home, so much for us piking! Not much point in staying so off to Wairoa for a feed and then home (Sunday night).

John Berry

No. in party: 4

John Berry, Ross Berry, Robyn Taylor and Keith Mitcherson

KIWI SADDLE

1 May 1983

No. 1272

This trip could have been called the trip that nearly wasn't. Having been missed off the fixture list, and with no leader offering his services, little interest was shown at the meeting, with only two non-members names appearing on the trip list. So it was with much regret the trip was officially called off.

With the weather so great on the Saturday I called John Jones and we left town at 6 a.m. Sunday and headed for the hills. Driving up the Taihape road then down Castle Rocks road, left down Lakes road, right down a recently formed road to the car park and we were ready to go. The Forestry have very kindly cut, or is it recut a track which zig-zags up to the spur leading up to the top of four one hundred.

The weather was very misty and cool but we thought that must lift soon. Is that mist or light rain thats running down my neck? Don't know, says J.J., but timz we swapped our bush shirts for parkas.

What's that looming out of the mist on top of four one hundred? - a new repeater station! Wasn't here last time.

We had an uneventful trip round the tops to Kiwi Saddle, arriving at 10 a.m. in time for smokc.

A couple of Wellingtonhunters and one local were in residence and commented on the comfort and cleanliness of our club hut. The weather stayed cold all morning, so we decided not to venture further.

After an early lunch and replacing firewood, we headed back out in clear but still cool weather, returning to town to enjoy a steaming hot spa.

G.R.

No. in party: 2

John Jones and Geoff Robinson.

TE IRINGA TRIG

15 May 1983

No. 1273

Sunday morning dawned a perfect day for a walkabout. Leaving the truck at the top of Gentle Annie we divided into faster and slower groups with the first climb up on the tussock covered ridge heading for Te Iringa. The views of the surrounding country improved as the sun reached progressively down ridges into the Ngaruroro River. At the trig about 10.00 a.m. prominent features like Mt. Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, Manson, Kaweka J and Cook's Horn were clearly visible, with not a breath of wind.

From here Craig and Michael had gone down to the Ngaruroro River to go out, and a fast party went to the Hogget Trig then back part way, meeting the slower party for lunch about 1.30 p.m. on the bush covered ridge between. Later, following compass bearings, the group moved down a dark bush-covered ridge for Hoodoo Saddle (which we missed) ending up in a small creek which provided our first drink for the day. Continuing down the drain (creek), the going was interesting with small frogs etc. improving gradually and turning into former logging roads. To finish up we connected with the formed road leading out past Timahanga Station buildings etc. to the truck near the Taihape road at 5.30. p.m. just as daylight faded, then home with Geoff driving.

Timahanga Station Manager - Jack Roberts
Phone: 810R Taihape Exchange

Leader: Randall Goldfinch

No. in party: 17

Rob Vork, Lance Pearson, Tinno O'Keefe, Andrew Windle, Heather Hawthorne, Graeme Taylor, Michael Henley, Russell Perry, Blair Horrochs, Paul Roberts, Tony Alexander, Bob Alexander, Randall Goldfinch, Geoff Robinson, Craig Ball, Michael Hawthorne and David Harrington.

NORTHERN RUAHINES - A

29 May 1983

No. 1274

With the promise of a good day, 25 hardy souls left in the truck, giving it it's first long run after extensive repairs to the 2-speed transfer box.

Arriving at the Glenny road roadhead which is to the left off Wakarara road just short of the old Makaroro Mill, we disembarked and changed into tramping gear, only to discover that leaving home in the dark I'd left behind my shorts, puttees and change of clothes. Not a good start I thought.

We headed off across the farmland, encountering a bit of tricky bush before we struck the track at the bottom of the Flounder. This climb sorted a few of us out and highlighted for me the difficulty of keeping a large party together.

On reaching the top of the Flounder, Dave, first checking with me, took a party up to the tops, while Russell led another group up to Patiki. Randall suggested he went on ahead to Gold Creek Hut to light a fire and put the billy on as by this time it was getting quite cold.

I last had tramped this track in 1977 and it doesn't appear to have been used very much since then, and when we arrived down at the hut there was no sign of a fire nor of Randall. They had taken a wrong turning where the track forked and on realising their mistake had bashed down to Gold Creek and back up to the hut, arriving one hour after we had.

Having enjoyed lunch we headed down Gold Creek which was running clear but fairly cold, climbing several slippery log-jams and negotiating a few small waterfalls, before arriving out at Makaroro River which much to my surprise was running quite high. From here we climbed up over the farmland and back down to the truck.

Russell's party returned out the same way half an hour after us and we picked up Dave's party down the road.

A good round trip with pleasant company.

Leader: Geoff Robinson

No. in party: 25

Geoff Robinson, Dave Harrington, Russell Perry, Ton Vork, Randall Goldfinch, Nicolas White, Alva McAdam, Edward and Susan Holmes, Stewart Little, Craig Ball, Michael Hawthorne, Raewyn Peters, Graeme Taylor, Lew Harrison, Rhys Thompson, Craig Figtree, Errol Porteous, George Prebble, Greg Latton, David Raikes, Stephen Bowden, Colin McMurtrie, Aran Douglas, Rowan Brooker.

RUAHINE RANGE - B

29 May 1983

On reaching level ground after climbing up from the Flounder, four of us broke away from the main group intending to reach the new hut at Buttercup Hollow. We headed off up Patiki ridge; it was quite good going as we had expected a fair bit of bush bashing. Half way up the old wind chill hit us so we stopped in a place out of the wind, had something to eat, dressed for the wind and carried on to the top from Patiki to the 4925 foot peak overlooking Armstrong Saddle, zig-zagging along avoiding the leatherwood as best as we could. Near the top we were in snow, sometimes knee deep. On arriving at the top we were hit by a really chilling wind. Te Atuaoparapara 5450 feet, and its neighbouring peaks looked impressive in their white winter blanket of snow with grey, cold looking clouds racing by. We did not look for long as we were breaking out with goosebumps on our knees, but ran off down the slope towards the shelter of the new hut at Buttercup Hollow.

After lunch we ventured back out into the chilly wind and quickly dropped down into the bush below where we removed our wind gear and had an easy quiet walk out to the road.

Leader: Lew Harrison

No. in party: 4

Michael Hawthorne, Craig Ball, Dave Harrington, Lew Harrison.

TONGARIRO SNOWCRAFT COURSE

No. 1275

4 - 6 June 1983

The growl of the motor and the dark of night securely wrap fourteen bodies in blissful seclusion. Only Les, Ross and Craig battle the traffic to deliver us safely at Mangatepopo roadend. How easy it is in the back to forget that someone is driving.

By 1 a.m. those who will be lucky enough to find sleep have already nodded off. Andrew and John defy the frost and elect the fresh-air-with-tussock option. The rumble of Les's snore from the cab reaches gently through the crisp air. It sounds comfortable.

Morning - perfect shine on Ngarruhoe and Tongariro. Not quite the snow we'd like, but enough. Discard excess snow gear, distribute party gear, count up ice-axes, crampons, rope and assorted technical, and demolish breakfast. Away by 9 a.m. under the heaviest packs most of us have carried for a while. Sixteen of us made for Tongariro while Les makes his own quiet plans. The weather is perfect and the morning passes pleasantly. By lunchtime we're on the saddle between the mountains. Peter Boomen and friend Fiona have joined us for the day.

We walk across the South Crater and set up camp on its western side. It's interesting to see the various styles of tent - traditional, tunnel and free standing - each looking especially colourful on the snow. The rest of Saturday is spent on quiet walks, companionable chatter, and lastly some step cutting and self arresting practice. These latter activities were quickly tested. The slope we were working on was iced quite heavily so those who attempted to cheat a little on the size of the steps soon found out how inefficient their self arrests were. All good, safe fun, and some lessons well-learned. John's experience proved to be particularly useful to all.

The sun drops behind Tongariro early and already the nightchill creeps up on us. Boil-in-bags bubble over stoves and everyone's in bed by 6.30 p.m. wondering what on earth they're going to do till morning. When's the last time you had 12 hours sleep? Amusement of some sort erupts in most tents, much to the delight of those listening nearby. We forget how thin nylon walls are.

Up for Sunday. The billy is on by 6.30 a.m. but the last ones out don't emerge until two hours later. Some have spent a chilly night.

David and Russell recon the area behind camp but find little suitable snow for snowcraft. It's either very hard and the crampons clink sweetly searching full purchase, or too soft in the spindrift and sunslopes. Step cutting, more self-arresting, step kicking, basic rope belays, sharing of various tips and experiences, and the morning passes. John, Andrew, David, Ross, Craig, and Michael depart to climb Ngauruhoe, hoping its slopes have been mollified by the sun. The rest of us lunch at camp with Les who has come up from his camp at Soda Springs.

The six on Ngauruhoe make excellent progress and reach the top at varying distances behind Speedball. It's very icy on top and the wind is a lazy one despite its vigour. An excellent glissade - bum slide coming down soon warms the bodies through. If only we could travel up hill like that!! Ross has skis with him, and skis the lower third - a little icy (that word again!) but worthwhile.

With the exception of Graeme and Peter, the rest of us climb up the south rim of Tongariro with a view to circumnavigating the South Crater via this rim. The ascent was messy, with Russell, Janet and Nick cutting steps for the flexible soled boots. They certainly don't have the purchase of rigids. The slope gets quite steep but we eventually scramble onto the top. And what do we find? Yes, that word again! We can't go anywhere. Everything is covered in glass. Without crampons we have one choice, and that is descend. Janet and I do have our crampons so we put them on, get everybody roped up, and I belay all seven off the top - tedious and cold work. John Jones sets up a second belay for those who find the slope still a little intimidating (He has come up after arriving back from Ngauruhoe) and gradually everyone loosens up into a rip-roaring bum slide. John and I get the pleasure of being last down a well-polished chute and it's almost better than the real thing! WOW!

Upon return to camp we hear a trapper has fallen off the Northern side onto the South Crater and is injured. Help has already been called but we offer comfort and cheer, and further promise of assistance if he's still there by nightfall. By 6 p.m. I was just organizing a carrying party to assist the fellow to our camp when the chopper flew in. Ross and Graeme race across the plateau to retrieve our equipment and all ends well. (We have since received a letter of thanks from the Tongariro Park Board).

Monday, and we must split into two parties. Unfortunately for those without crampons, conditions are too precarious on the tops to allow everyone to go out via Ketetahi. By 9 a.m. the bottom party have disappeared in the direction

of the saddle and Managatepope. The top party check out equipment and make a final clear up of the campsite, then lift off directly behind the hut to follow a spur all the way to the highest point on Tongariro's Northern rim. In the cool wind, some zip around to the summit, striking much water-ice on the way. It seems rain has fallen on earlier snow and makes travel impossible without those precious steel points.

The descent towards Ketetahi, by contrast is very warm. A pleasant time is spent curling on the Emerald Lakes, then up with packs once more to journey down to Ketetahi Hut by 1 p.m. Lunch here, then a quick sprint down to the truck that Les has brought round for us. The path down is in various stages of reconstruction and should be a regular concrete and board freeway with traffic lights by next year. The stress of so many feet on the trail has made this a necessity though.

A good trip then. The weather was perfect for all three days. The snow conditions did mean some people couldn't do some of the activities but everybody learned something, even if it was just what to buy for next time. The journey home was interrupted with a grub-and-swim stop in Taupo; and we were in Napier by 9 p.m.

Thanks to John Jones for snowcraft assistance and Les Hanger for driving those many miles.

Leader: Russell Perry

No. in party: 17

Craig Ball, Michael Hawthorne, Andrew Windle, Janet Brown, Ross Berry, John Jones, Graeme Taylor, Nick Hay, Peter Hamelink, David Harrington, Greg Latton, Neil Lambie, Clyde Potter, Les Hanger, Tania and Sara.

HINERUA HUT

No. 1276

(Not Tamaki River as was originally planned)

10 July 1983

Because of cold overcast conditions, on the Sunday morning that 10 of us descended upon Carter Holt's corner, we decided that it would be a mite inclement to pursue the idea of going up the Tamaki River and on to the hut, so we headed south in the truck to Mill Road Farm just over the hill 'a-way' from Moorcocks Base camp.

It was raining lightly when we got there, but we carried on, consulted the map then headed on down to the river and up the Hinerua Saddle, branching off to the right across farmland and on up to the hut, crossing a series of ridges.

The pace was quite rapid for the party in front, whereas the other half was a little slower.

We all gathered at a smoky Hinerua Hut and had lunch, then four of the fitter capable members headed away at 1 p.m. to go up and have a look at the tops. The rest of the party headed back the same way we had come in to go back to Mill Farm, where the tail of the party arrived just before dark - about 4.30 p.m, while the four intrepid climbers that went up to the tops came out and joined us at the truck at 5.30 p.m.

We experienced rather heavy windgusts on the road returning but arrived back in Hastings by 7 p.m.

We all had a really good trip and I thank those people who took part in waiting patiently for other members.

P.S. Just a "footnote" in relation to footwear: one of the school lads that was on the trip had only sandshoes and I was told during the trip that his mother asked someone at the meeting if sandshoes would be suitable, and the person said yes. Well I personally feel that on no trips at all should anyone wear sandshoes: you should always have good ankle support at all times.

K.L.

Leader: Karen Lancaster

No. in party: 10

Geoff Robinson, J. Marshall, David Marshall, Graeme Taylor, Lew Harrison, Russell Perry and three N.B.H.S.

WAIKAMAKA HUT

This here hut, used by thee
belongs to the members of the H.T.C.
We all worked hard
to provide for you,
The very latest in wallboard.

It gets quite chilly in this valley
So we humped in this pot-belly.
Randall, he got this rack
so a burn't sock you won't take back.
Ain't we good and kind to you.

Now theré's something you can do.
before you go out the door
We have for you a little chore -
Not much effort to sweep the floor,
and don't forget to fill the firewood store.

Now wasn't that done with ease,
so switch out the light before you leave.

S.K.H.

DEAD DOG VIA HERRICK'S SPUR

25 - 26 June 1983

We left Hastings at 6.30 a.m. and travelled to Herrick's Hut in Andrew's Landrover and my Fiat. Then the five of us, not being sure where the track started, bashed straight up onto Herrick's from the top of the farmland. It was not pleasant. From Herricks the track goes up the spur which is more or less open (often less) with patches of bush.

When we neared the top of the ridge we hit some snow and then when we got out on top it was calf-deep, crusty and very difficult and unpleasant to walk on. (Ah! while looking for the map I've just found an uneaten "moro"! Moral: writing trip reports pays dividends.)

From the top of the spur it took us about an hour to reach No Mans fairly early in the afternoon but by the time we got organized it was getting dark, so it was probably wise to arrive a little early. (There is no axe at No Mans.) After a good night's sleep we left the hut as we found it, clean and tidy, and headed down the 4-wheel-drive track towards Ruahine. The track takes off to the right of the road and goes very nearly vertically down to Dead Dog creek through some very nice bush. Then it's just a short walk down to Dead Dog which is on the true left. On Saturday we had been glad of the perfect weather because of the magnificent views from Herricks Spur but on Sunday the sun gave us cause to rejoice because it kept us warm while walking down Dead Dog creek. After we had travelled about 2/3 of the way down the river Andrew led us up a most unlikely looking place for a track but after a few painful minutes we emerged on a overgrown but beautifully flat sidle track that wound its way through giant Kanukas with a lovely understory of Rangiora and of a red stemmed Pittisporum. This track took us right out to Herrick's Hut and we were home before 4 o'clock. An excellent trip with fantastic weather and views, and one the club could well keep in mind for the future, especially a day trip to Dead Dog.

Thanks to the providers and drivers of vehicles and to the people at Thorn Flat for letting us use their road.

P.B.

No. in party: 5

Peter Berry, Keith Mitcherson, Nick White, Andrew Windle, David Campbell.

NORTH ISLAND TRAVERSE

December - January - February 1981 - 1982

After reading Graeme Dingle's book 'Two Against the Alps' about his winter traverse of the Southern Alps. I thought it would be great to do a similar trip in the bush. On discovering that the traverse of the North Island, that is from Cook Strait to the top of East Cape, had never been done before, I thought I'll give it a go. That was back in 1976. Finally in mid-1981 Jenny and I started the preparations for the ten week trip. In early December with about \$800 of food we motored around the country-side, burying food dumps at six of the roads we were going to be crossing. It was a lot of travelling too! We managed to spend another \$800 on this and that also. My aim was to do the full length without a break from the bush and didn't want to depend on anyone to do anything for us. That's why I arranged the food dumps myself.

Finally on the morning of Boxing Day we boarded the bus to Wellington where John Gregory from H.V.T.C. transported us to our starting point of our traverse, the Orongorongo River mouth. With six days food we bid farewell and wandered off up the Orongorongo River on a fine hot afternoon to Baine-iti Hut. From here the route we took was up the river, up North Boulder Creek, along Rimutaka Range, down Oreone Stream, up Waiorongomai River, down Pakuratahi River, up and over to Cross Creek, along part of the old rail line and then we found an overgrown track through gorse to the Rimutaka Road arriving mid-day on the 5th day. On the second day we were lucky when a few goats sent a couple of rocks down towards us from above while we were climbing up a steep gut. Most of the travel was fairly rough, encountering quite a few waterfalls and deep pools, while up above we bashed through patches of Leatherwood, stunted Horopito, thick Kiekie, Cupplejack, Rangiora and also the dreaded gorse. The weather was good with the odd day of drizzle.

Crossing the Rimutaka Road we crawled through more gorse down to Abbots Stream encountering a few marijuana plants on the way. Next problem was to find our No 1 food dump which was buried near a pylon but which pylon was it? After bush bashing we were pleased to find our 14-day food dump. From here the route we took was up the Tauhorenikau River, over Cone Saddle, up Waiohine River, up Totara Creek to Mountain House, up Atiwhakatu Stream, over Pinnacle Ridge, up Waingawa River, over Cow Saddle, up Ruamahanga River to Herepai then down the Ngapuketurua Stream. Up to here it was reasonable going with problems of gale force winds and high rivers. Pack-floating the muddy Mangahao River during a hail and thunderstorm was no fun where Jenny was lucky while high sidling; she slid out of control for fifty feet before hitting a fallen tree

at the edge of a 200foot rock face. We bush-bashed over to Patupaiarehe Stream, over to Kahuterawa Stream then Ross Creek. After here we had boring roads along the tops to Manawatu Gorge arriving mid-day on the 17th day.

No 2 food dump consisted of 16 days food and it was good to know that the next couple of weeks was easy going. Half a day had us on Wharike and stuffed. I think 16 days food is too much for comfort. Coppermine Hut was great, having our first decent wash of the trip. The route we took was Mangaatua Stream, Raparapawai Stream, Keretaki Hut, Kumeti Hut, Rokaiwhana Stream, Tamaki River, Cattle Creek, Pohangina River, Ngamoko Range and Ruahine Range to Howletts Hut. Bad weather forced us off Tiraha so down to Dapnine Hut and up to Tarn Bivi hoping for a good day following. Next day, the weather was worse. Down Rosvalls Track we then took the bottom route passing Hinerua Hut, Smith Creek to Middle Creek Hut. Sadly Jenny had to walk out to get medical treatment for her poisoned foot. I continued on up Waipawa River to Armstrong Saddle, along the tops but at Te Atua Mahura I was forced off the tops by gale force winds, so down Colenso Track, up the other side and along the bush tops. Had one hell of a time with gale force winds at Ohawai, Shutes Hut, Comet Hut and along to the Napier-Taihape Road where I arrived on the 30th day.

No 3 food dump consisted of 9 days food where Jenny rejoined me against doctors orders. The next few days were easy being up to Te Iringa, down to Cameron Hut, up to Kiwi Saddle and along the tops to the Mohaka River and Hot Springs for our first hot wash. Crossing the river we bush bashed up to ridge tops and along to Te Hatai where I made our only navigation mistake. Only 180° off course. It cost us nearly half a day. Down in the Ripia River, going was slow due to gorges and thick scrub. Up the Panemanga Stream were a few waterfalls but back on the tops was painfully slow. For two hours we spent our time on hands and knees or wriggling on our stomachs through extremely thick, stunted coprosmas. We travelled half a mile in that time. Down to Ohane Stream, the land of ongaonga and hookgrass, then further down-stream to the beautiful hot springs. Very relaxing. Further down stream into Stoney Creek took us to the Napier Taupo Road.

No 4 food dump was surprisingly light being 6 days supply. Travel and weather was good most of the way. We travelled up the Otawhiri Stream, over to the Matakuhia Stream, across to Pukahunui Stream and Te Hoe River then past Bullring and Mangakahika Huts to Te Wairoa Hut. The gorge below here was quite exciting and also very wetting which meant pack-floating, and moreover we caught our first trout here. We headed on to S.H. 38 arriving on the 43rd day.

Food dump No 5 consisted of 15 days food and with fine weather we travelled down Whakatane River, over to Takurua Stream, up the Waikare gorge, over to Tauranga River, which meant it was new country for us from here onwards. We travelled up Stane Stream finding a loo but no hut, up and over to Tataweka Stream. This catchment took us out to S.H. 2 via Waioeka River where we caught a couple of nice trout. Crossing the road brought us into the Urutawa S.F. We travelled the Little Manganuka Stream and Tokenui Stream where I slipped on a rock which made me limp for a couple of days. The gorge in this stream is really exciting being narrow and dark like a tunnel. In one place we slid down a chute into a pool, being glad it wasn't too rough. Up the Wahaatua Stream, over to Pakihi Stream, and along an old horse track brought us out to the Opotiki Motu Road on the 51st day.

No 6 and final food dump was our largest being enough for 21 days. Boy, it was heavy! We plodded down the Whitikau Stream then up and over to the mighty Motu River to celebrate Jennys birthday. Travelling down the Motu had me worried as I didn't know if it was possible. All was well until we pack-floated through Te Paku gorge where we had a spot of trouble so we clambered onto a handy rock ledge. With no pack on, Jenny rock-climbed round but after dropping our rope into the river she jumped in after it with boots on. Grabbing the rope she couldn't make headway against the current of the whirlpool, ran out of strength and went under. Luckily the current carried her towards me and she managed to grab my outstretched foot. It was too close to death to forget. We managed the rest of the river O.K. We travelled the Big Unknown Stream Te Kahiko Stream, Mangatutara Stream, over the Ruakumara Range and down the Mangamauku Stream where we got stranded for 4 days because of flooded rivers. Travelling the still-flooded Oronui Stream we couldn't afford to make any mistakes. We passed that test O.K. Up Huitatariki Stream, up to Te Ranganuiatou, down the Ruakokore River and the last of the difficult stage was over. The last couple of days was up the Waikura River and down the Whangaparaoa River which was easy. We finished the trip at 11.00 on the 2nd March taking a total of 67 days.

P.S. I have written a 40 page day to day account on the trip and also took about 230 slides on the trip.

David Harrington and Jenny Christmas

Forecasting and warning has now become a very sophisticated, and a well-planned evacuation system to clear threatened areas and close threatened roads ensure that the Swiss live as well as possible with their white menace.

Reference: Geographical Magazine - March 1983

CHANGE TO RULES

To be voted on at the A.G.M. 23 November 1983: change to Club Rule No. 23.

Reads as now: The Annual General Meeting shall be held on the same day in the month of October in each year to be determined by the executive committee.

Amend to: Proposed by A. Berry, seconded by L. Hanger, that the A.G.M. be held on a day within three calendar months of the closing of the financial year at 30th September.

The Search and Rescue exercise is to be held on the 8 - 9 October 1983.

The Annual General Meeting will be on the 23rd November 1983.

On 6th November a special trip to the Triplex area will be held to raise funds for the Cancer Society. Trips to suit all levels; all welcome.

The Right of Risk

How safe do we need to make the wilderness?

By Dennis G. Hanson

The two young couples were picnicking on the seaward cliffs of Point Reyes National Seashore when they heard the raspy barks of a few sea lions somewhere on the rocks far below. Wanting a closer look, three of the four ventured downward. They slipped and plunged 200 feet to their deaths.

Later, the man who survived said that the party had indeed noticed the three large brown National Park Service signs they had passed on the approach to the sea cliffs. And after parking the car, they had seen yet another warning on the split-rail fence they scrambled over: "Hazardous Cliffs—Stay Behind Railing." There was another large sign posted on the hill: "Go Back—Prohibited Area."

Nevertheless, the parents of the dead man and those of the man who survived sued the National Park Service for failure to provide

adequate protection or warning. By the time the case reached the docket, three years later, one of two rangers who tried to rescue the picnickers had been transferred to Sequoia National Park. The other had left the service and moved to Alaska. Despite its seemingly air-tight defense, the federal government considered the tab for the courtroom too costly. It settled out of court for \$3,000. Actual cost, including salaries and other administrative expenses, was estimated in the tens of thousands.

A similar incident occurred in Sequoia National Park in 1974. A man walked off a hiking path, stepped around a sign that read, "High-Water—Slippery Rocks," walked down to the high water, slipped on the slippery rocks, was pinned downstream be-



On the edge at Yosemite: Whose responsibility?

tween two other rocks, and drowned. Two years and five depositions later, the government settled for \$1,600. Again, hidden costs were much more.

Or consider the case of the Japanese tourist who fell into the turbulent Merced River in Yosemite National Park in 1979 and drowned. The area where he tumbled was clearly posted: "Hazardous Water." But the man couldn't read English. The Park Service was sued for \$500,000. Though the case was finally resolved without Park Service liability, it put superintendents on notice that forevermore they will have to decide—sometimes arbitrarily—how many foreign visitors it takes to necessitate multilingual signs.

These are examples of a growing problem in the nation's wilderness system—a legal problem that has posed

a conundrum for park superintendents and managers: How safe should we make our wild lands?

It's a difficult question, indeed, and getting more and more important. For one thing, the number of people visiting the nation's public wild lands goes up about 7 percent every year. In 1980 more than 300 million visits were made to the National Park system, nearly double the number ten years ago. Even in tough economic times, the parks have, in one superintendent's words, the three great lures: "Location, location, and location."

At the same time, the park system has grown. It now has 81 million acres of wild lands—a 260 percent increase in just the past three years. And those were years in which staffing actually went down.

Predictably, accidents and deaths are up. In 1980, 209 deaths were recorded in the national parks, up from 165 in 1970. There is reality lurking behind the pretty pictures—the spectacular trees and rocks occasionally fall; the rarely spotted silverback grizzly can drag you out of your tent; the cool, spring-laden rivers might pull you under (drowning, hands down, is the number-one killer in the parks).

And along with the deaths and injuries, lawsuits are on the rise. Though such tort suits haven't reached the big-leagues of settlements, they do add up. Throughout the national park system there are millions of dollars in tort claims outstanding—\$2 million in Yosemite alone.

"Maybe we've created our own problem child," says Dick Riegelhuth, chief of the Resources Management Division in Yosemite. "We've spent so

William M. Wood

many years telling the public, 'Look at these terrific places we have here. Come on in and see them. We'll take care of you.'"

It's an old problem, inherent even in the charter of the National Park Service: choosing between preserving the wildness of public lands and protecting the people who use them.

And the problem is even more complicated these days: No longer is it just the traditional nature lover finding respite in our national parks. Today it is also the grocer from Des Moines and the hack driver from Newark—windshield tourists moving through the outdoors as if it were an extension of their own living rooms.

John Byrne, superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and a host of other capital areas, says that tort law mandates him to protect or warn the public from "hidden defects." That includes trees, rocks, and whatnot that might fall on someone. A park manager, therefore, must sometimes compromise true wildness for the sake of safety—tacking up a Japanese sign here, putting up a handrail there. At the bottom of providing park experience, he says, is the "reasonable man" test.

"The legal line that any park manager has to meet is 'What's reasonable in this situation?'" Byrne says.

A lawyer for the Justice Department, a U.S. solicitor who asked that his name not be used, works on legal cases for the National Park Service and has spent more than 12 years trying to clarify how far the government must go to protect visitors to national parks. So far, he says, he has no clear answers.

In civil lawsuits concerning national parks, the federal government can be liable to the same degree that a private citizen would be in any given state. California regulations are needed for Death Valley problems; Wyoming regulations for Yellowstone.

"But everywhere," says the solicitor, "whether the public was warned or not, the courts have traditionally held the Park Service not liable if it's an *obvious* danger." That includes teasing a grizzly or doing handstands on Grand Canyon's lip. It also includes the big risk takers and adrenalin junkies—high-wall rock climbers, whitewater kayakers, deep-cave spelunkers, the people who know both the craft and the chances.

But there will always be exceptions to test the rules. For instance, between June and September, from sunrise to 8:30 in the morning, 12 hang gliders each day are allowed to take off from the lip of Yosemite's Glacier Point, 2,000 feet

above the valley floor. The pilots are certified, have permits, and are checked out by a park ranger. In five years, only one serious accident has occurred.

But what if a hang glider crumples in midair after a going-over by the ranger? Or if a ringer with a forged rating takes a couple of tourists with him when he slams into the valley floor?

Or there was the case, in 1975, of two men struck by lightning on Morro Rock in Sequoia National Park. One was killed, the other so seriously injured that he remains a physical and mental invalid. The families of both men sued, charging that the Park Service knew the cliffs were subject to frequent lightning strikes and yet did nothing to warn the men. The case was finally thrown out of court in 1980, the Park Service being held blameless because lightning probably had not struck precisely that spot consistently.

Blameless that time, but what happens when another thunderbolt screams down on that spot—1, 10, or 20 years from now, taking a whole troop of Boy Scouts? Still blameless? So far, no answer.

It all presents a confusing picture, vague concepts established on a contradictory notion: safe wilderness. Prohibition at either extreme is probably not the answer.

"Instead of a sign that says 'No Swimming,'" the government lawyer suggests, "it should say 'If you swim here you are risking an undertow, an alligator, or whatever.' Place the moral and legal burden on the user."

About the only really new development in the issue has come in California and several other western states, where government attorneys are taking advantage of something called a "Visitor Use Statute." Though it may vary slightly from state to state, in essence it means that the Park Service is not liable if the person injured did not pay an entrance fee. The statute has been upheld in the courts.

Ultimately, however, the chances of accidents in the national parks—and the threat of lawsuits—will continue to grow. To some, that prospect is not altogether bad—in an ironic way.

"You know, in a sense, these kinds of lawsuits are a good sign," says Dick Riegelhuth. "It means that out there in our national parks, there's still enough of real nature left to be dangerous."



Dennis G. Hanson is a former senior editor of Audubon magazine currently living in El Portal, California.

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FIXTURE LIST

August
20 - 21st

KAWEKA RANGE - Ballards via Middle Hill. This is an excellent trip on snow-covered tops. A slower party can spend time at Middle Hill Hut and explore the tops via Ihaka track.
Maps: N113, N123

Leader: Craig Ball Phone: 84963

September
4th

KAWEKA RANGE - Kaweka Hut. An old style H.T.C. hut. Plenty of scope climbing up to the Tits, Kaiarahi and Studholme Saddle Hut.
Map: N123

Leader: Geoff Robinson Phone: 87863
Jim Glass 778748

17 - 18th

KAIMANAWA STATE FOREST - Cascade Hut via Clements Access. (Possible Friday night) Beautiful circuit track.
Map: N103

Leader: Randall Goldfinch Phone: 439163

October
2nd

NORTH RUAHINE RANGE - Sentry Box - Parks Peak. Good regenerated bush. Steep climb - great descent.
Map: N133

Leader: Karen Lancaster Phone: 58033

8 - 9th

SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE

16th

KAWEKA RANGE - Black Birch Range. An exploration of an unnamed creek and some 'nice, open' bush.
Map: N123

Leader: Lew Harrison Phone: 85701

21 - 24th

LABOUR WEEKEND
KAWEKA AND KAIMANAWA RANGES - In via Poronui, up Oamaru River to Boyds Lodge. This trip will cover a lot of interesting ground for both fast and slow groups.
Map: N113

Leader: Peter Berry Phone: 778772

30th

NORTH RUAHINE RANGE - Diane's Hut. In from Lessong's Monument down to Koau Stream (and out?).
Map: N133

Leader: Craig Ball Phone: 84963

November
12-13th

KAWEKA RANGE -- Over to Back Ridge Hut and down into Rocks Ahead Stream. Should be out by Tuesday? (CAIRN TRIP)
Map: N123

Leader: The President

27th

RUAHINE RANGE - Waipawa River, onto Three Johns, down Middle Stream. A good haul for the fit ones.
Map: N140

Leader: Andrew Windle Phone: 55966

December
10 - 11th

SOUTH RUAHINE RANGE - Down Pohangina River from its source. An excellent river trip - easy travel but quite long.
Maps: N140, N144, N145

Leader: Randall Goldfinch Phone: 439163

CHRISTMAS TRIP - Arrange one and let everyone know! P.S. Don't leave it too late.

Trip leaders after New Year to be decided at later meeting.

January
22nd

TUTIRA AREA - Down the Esk River. There's much excitement in this 'quiet' river. You'll certainly get wet.
Maps: N114, N124

February
4 - 6th

KAWEKA RANGE - Manson (Otutu Bush) - Ngaawapurua. In via Kiwi Saddle, probably Friday night, and out somehow.
Maps: N113, N123

11 - 12th

ABORTA CONTORTA - Working bee, Tongariro National Park.

19th

KAWEKA RANGE - Tutaekuri River. Good waterfalls and beautiful waterfalls. You can do as much of the river as you're prepared to swallow.
Maps: N123, N124

March
3 - 4th

AHIMANAWA RANGE - In towards Tunurangi, and out via Omaroua Stream. A navigating, camping out trip.
Map: N114

18th

SOUTHERN RUAHINE RANGE - Coppermine Creek. Visit to old mine workings - you may find a policeman.

31 - 32nd

CENTRAL RUAHINE RANGE - Up Government Spur to Ohūinga, down into Western Watershed. Return over the tops.
Map: N140