

Anatoki River/Lake Stanley/Waingaro River Crossover



On a beautiful fine sunny morning we headed off up the Anatoki valley, climbing and sidling to get to the old benched gold miners track that leads to Anatoki Forks. This track was initially constructed in the 1860's and sidles high above Anatoki River. After several hours we descended in a series of zigzags to cross a major side creek at Anatoki Bend where we had lunch.

From there we sidled in and out of numerous gullies through mixed beech /podocarp forest which seemed never ending before finally arriving at Anatoki Forks hut.(6 bunks built by the NZFS/NZDA in the mid 1970's)

On Sunday morning we awoke to a frost and another clear morning and got away to an early start. The track climbs past early gold workings and water races up the true right branch of the Anatoki, to a saddle at 1100m leading over into the Stanley River catchment. From there, a descent of approx 300 m led down to Lake Stanley, formed by a huge slip in the 1929 Murchison earth quake. This proved to be the only significant section of windfalls we encountered.

Continuing on we sidled above the lake and followed the shoreline to the lake outlet and old site of Smokey Drip hut. The slip that formed the lake is certainly impressive and took some time to cross. The river bed is wide and braided for some distance downstream. We finally climbed high above a gorge before descending to Waingaro hut, which was a welcome sight. This little 4 bunk hut, which sits in a clearing above the forks, dates back to gold mining during the depression in the 1930's and was superbly restored in 2009.

Another fine, clear morning as we left the hut and crossed the swing bridge over an impressive gorge to join the historic pack track, again noting evidence of past mining activity. It was a steady climb up to Skeet Creek and onto Locket Range before breaking out into stunted vegetation dominated by Manuka.

At the turn off to Riordans Hut, we dropped our packs to take a side trip to this historic 3 bunk hut, a relic from early farming activity. Continuing along the crest of the range we stopped for lunch on a

prominent rock by Tin Hut, looking out over Waingaro River and Devil Range. From there it was all downhill on a gradual, seemingly never ending, descent to the Uruwhenua car park.

This trip was done in conjunction with Wainui Tramping Club.