

Kiwi Mouth Hut, Kaweka Forest Park

From Lakes car park, a DOC sign points the way to Kiwi Saddle Hut. The track passes beneath pines, then zigzags through kanuka forest as it ascends 650m to the 1250m summit of Kuripapango.

A short distance on, the Smith Russell Track is joined and a DOC sign indicates a further 2.5hr to Kiwi Saddle Hut. But just before this is an indistinct rock cairn guarding the entry to an obscure path heading left off the main track to the summit of Kuripapango and magnificent views of Mt Ruapehu through to the Ruahine Range.

The Smith Russell Track passes through stands of trees, resembling a cathedral with branches arching over a gently winding path.

Out of the shelter of the trees, the track becomes exposed, and a minor summit marks the junction with the track to Cameron Hut. From here, it's a 30-minute downhill to reach Kiwi Saddle Hut.

The hut is located on a saddle surrounded by beech trees. It's not a DOC hut and those staying there should make a donation to the Heretaunga Tramping Club. The hut sits at the crossroads of the northern route up to Studholme Saddle and the western route into Manson Country and Kiwi Mouth Hut.

A misleading DOC sign at the crossroads indicates it is only a further two hours to Kiwi Mouth Hut, but this is optimistic.

About 1km beyond Kiwi Saddle Hut, decide between two routes to Kiwi Mouth Hut: over Pt1238 or down Kiwi Creek.

Kiwi Mouth Hut is located at the foothills of Manson Country and was built in the 1960s. It has four bunks, an open fire and ample flat areas for tents. The nearby Ngaruroro River provides a plentiful water supply.

Wild File

Access The Lakes car park, off the Taihape Road

Grade Moderate – difficult

Time Car park to Kiwi Saddle Hut, 3.5hr; To Kiwi Mouth Hut, 2.5-3.5hr

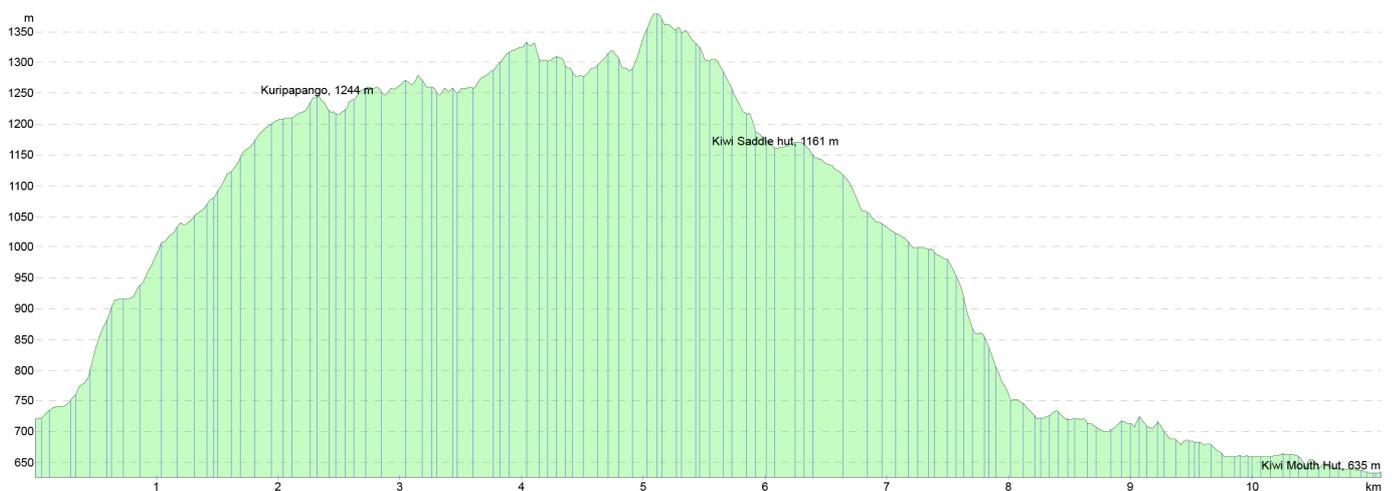
Distance 11.1km

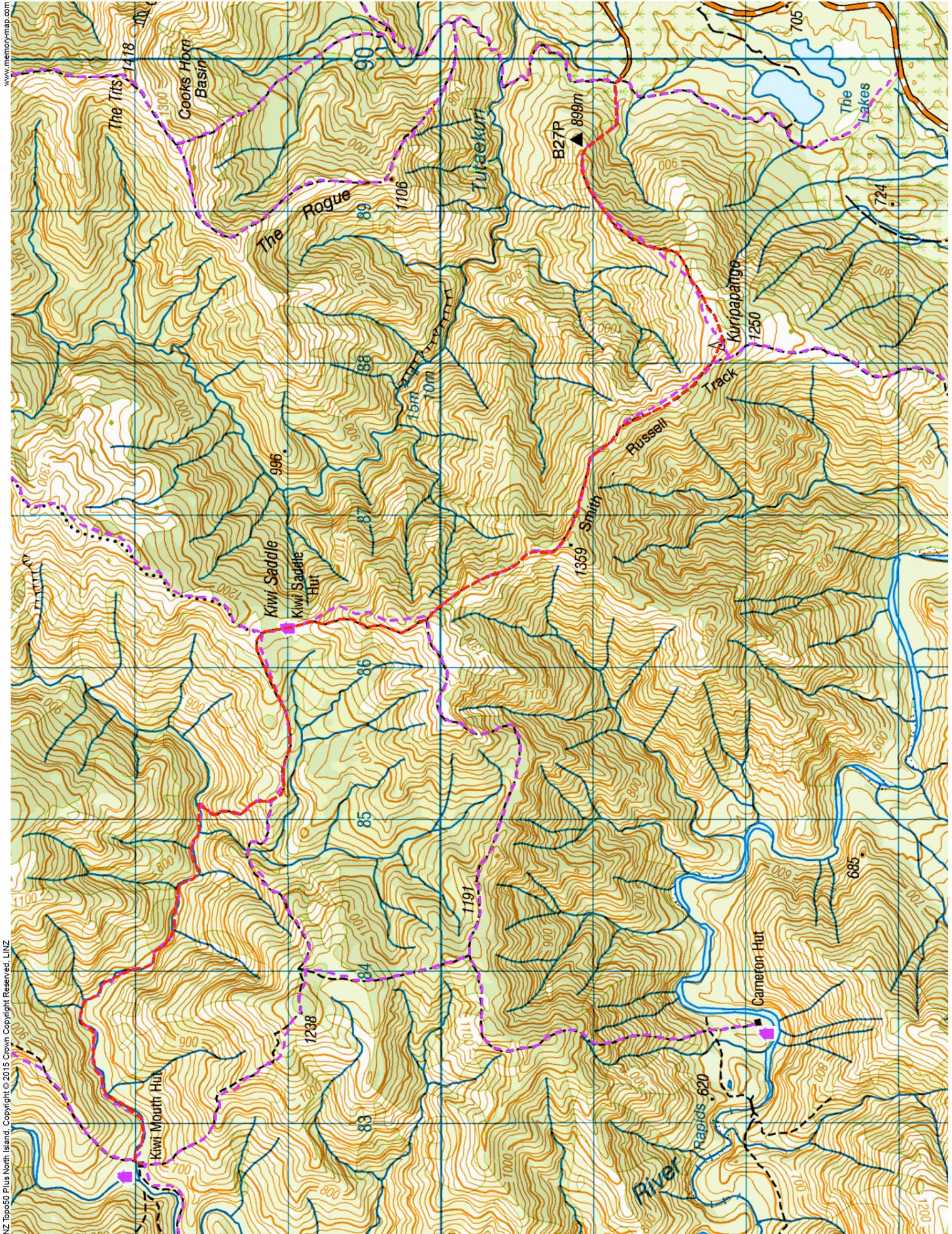
Total ascent 905m

Accommodation Kiwi Saddle Hut (\$5 donation to Heretaunga Tramping Club, eight bunks), Kiwi Mouth Hut (\$5, four bunks)

Topo50 map BJ37

Elevation Profile





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