

## Published

Summer 2017

### Route overview

3 days

Difficult

Navigation skills required

Hodder Huts require payment to the Marlborough Tramping Club \$10.00 per night

Water availability excellent

River level can make the route impassable

Snow on peak in shoulder seasons

Access from Gladstone Downs Station across private land

### Track Times

Car Park to Hodder Huts  
5-9 hours

Hodder Huts to Summit  
return 6-9 hours

# Tapuae-O-Uenuku

## Trip Notes

This classic tramping mountain in the Inland Kaikoura Ranges takes you to the summit of the highest peak outside the southern alps. On a clear day it affords views of the North Island and provides an excellent place to test your navigation skills on a non-technical route. This trip is best attempted in summer as you'll spend most of the trip in and out trudging through the Hodder River and snow on the mountain itself requires mountaineering skills and equipment.



*Looking towards the summit ridge*



*Summit looking north*

### BEFORE YOU GO

Call Bev and Allan Pitts (land owners) at Gladstone Downs station for permission to cross their land and to check on current conditions - (03) 575 7471. They'll let you know how many people are expected at the huts so that you can plan accordingly (there are spaces to tent if needed). Gladstone Downs can be reached by turning off on Awatere Valley Rd just north of Seddon and following it for 55km. You'll find a car park on the far side of the bridge over the Hodder river.

### GLADSTONE DOWNS TO HODDER HUTS 14.6KM

Track starts on the true left of the Hodder River. Initially follow 4WD track through Gladstone Downs for the first 2.5km until the track descends into the Hodder River bed (well marked with a large rock cairn). Alternatively it is possible to follow the river all the way from the road if the water levels are low.

Once the river bed is reached navigation is straightforward upriver. Mid way up river an area of open braided river is met. Shortly after passing through this open area Trail Stream joins the Hodder River on the true left. Be sure to continue up the Hodder River at this point (and not Trail Stream).

Approximately 2km further upstream a track begins on the true right of the river (look for the cairns) and climbs steeply to avoid an impassable waterfall. After gaining height the track sidles around at the 1160m contour before dropping back into the river. Travel from here is well marked on the true left of the river to the Hodder Huts (which will by now be visible). Total elevation gain 1080m.

### **HODDER HUTS TO SUMMIT**

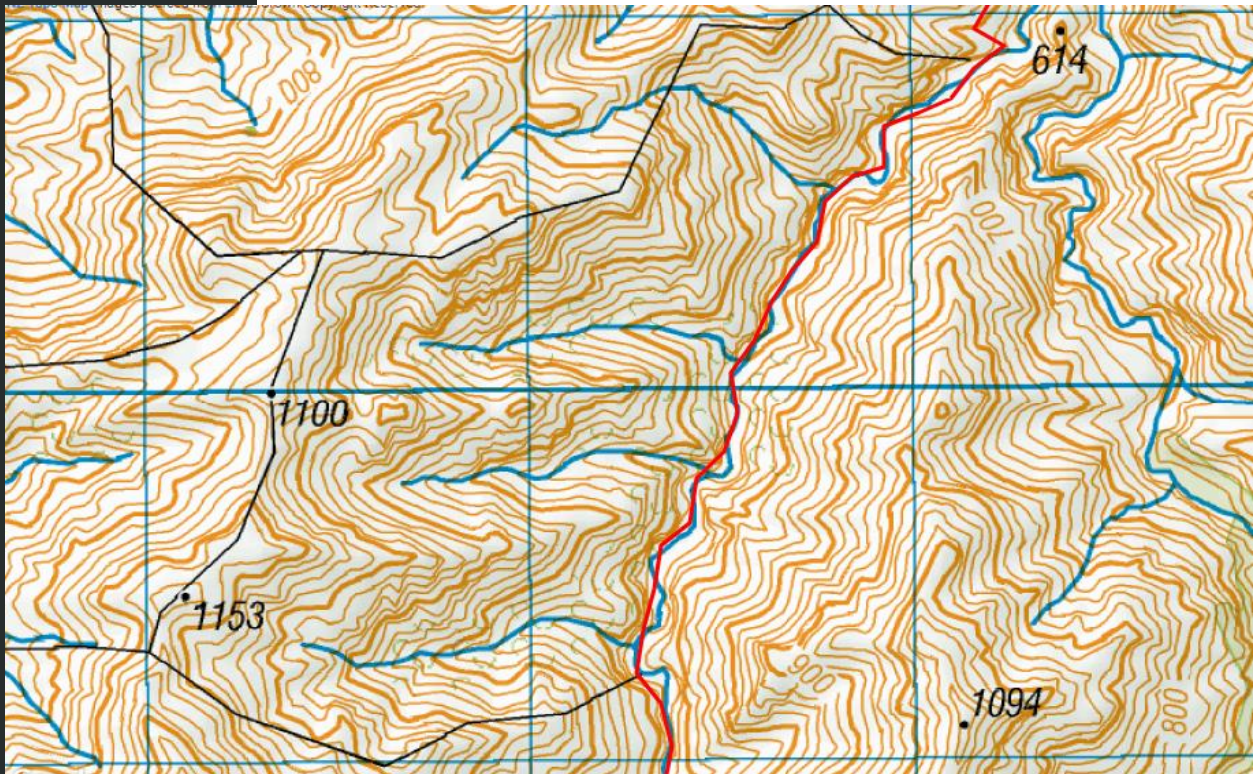
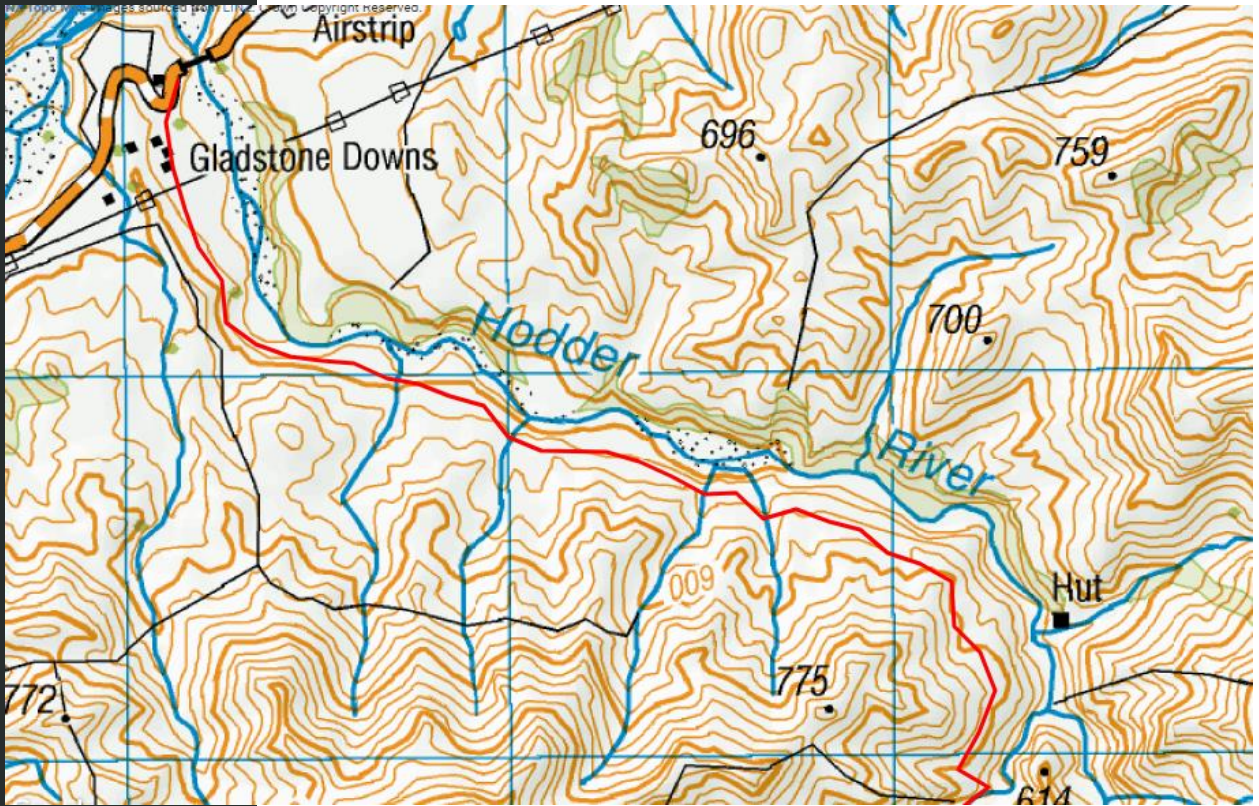
From the hut follow the clearly defined track across shingle slopes until it drops to the Hodder River. Cross the Hodder below Staircase Stream and follow the cairned track up tussock slopes on the true right of Staircase Stream. Continue to follow the well cairned track until it passes underneath a waterfall. This is the last place to fill your water bottle.

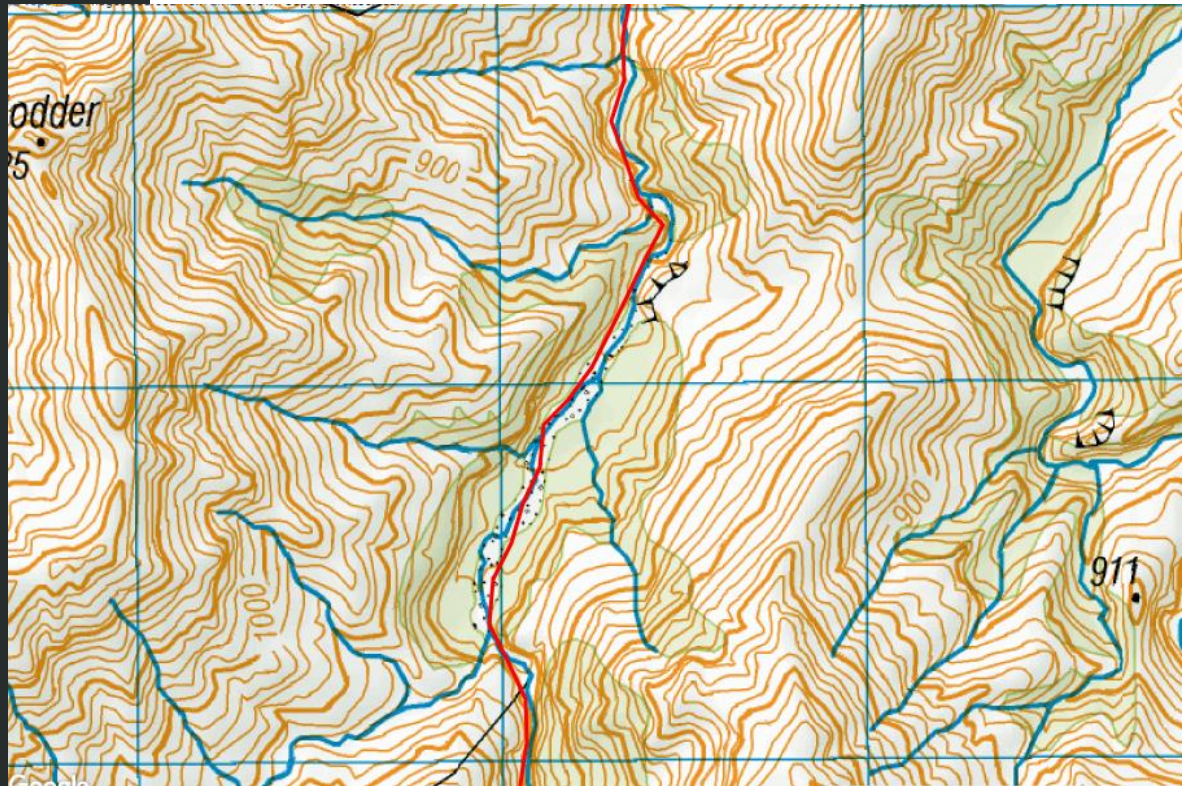
At this point the basin begins to open up in front of you. Keep to the left and after only a short distance past the waterfall (~250m) turn left up a steep shingle slope which may have cairns on it. At the top of this slope the gradient levels out and into a large boulder field. Look for cairns leading across this before angling to your right out into a small basin. Follow the cairns directly towards the summit once around the corner (you won't be able to actually see the top itself but the slope just below it).

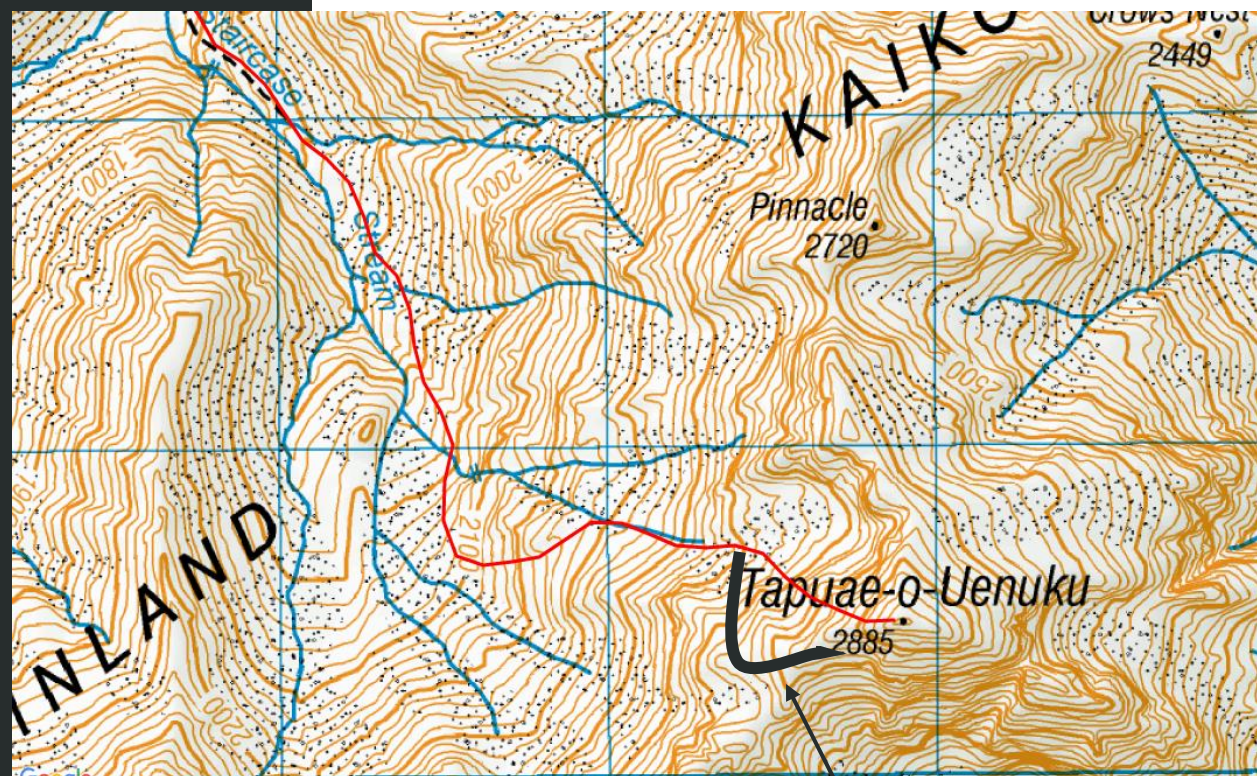
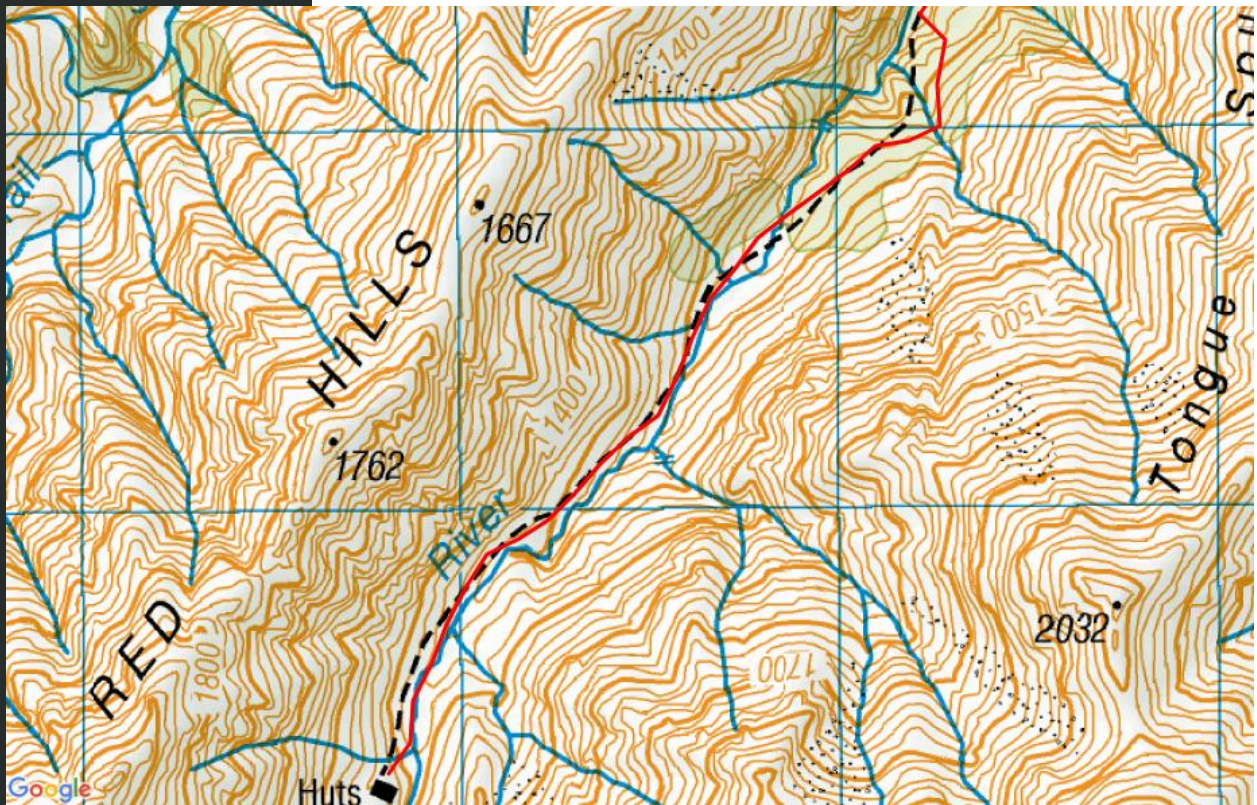
There will be two large shingle slopes heading up to the summit ridge to your right as you continue to climb. Both of these slopes can provide access to the main ridge (in the attached map we took the second of the two scree slopes) but the one on the right is less steep and gains the summit ridge slightly lower down. Climb the scree slope to the ridge then follow the ridge itself directly to the summit.

The scree is by definition loose and slippery in places but the route is safe to ascend without ropes in summer. Poles would help with the descent especially if you're less confident moving on this type of terrain.

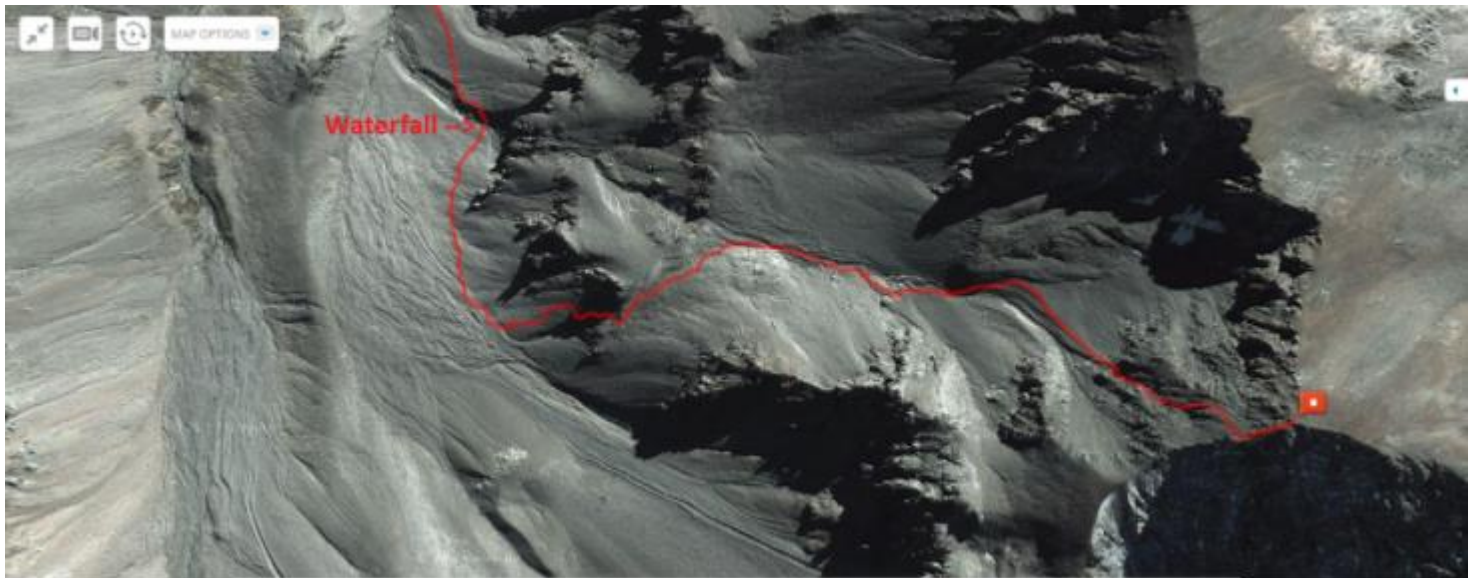
Addit: In the hut books some people report difficulties in finding the route to the summit. It would appear the majority of them continue to the saddle between Mt Tapuae-O-Uenuku and Mt Alarm rather than heading up the shingle slopes soon after the waterfall. While it is possible to still climb to the summit from this saddle it takes considerably longer (resulting in many parties aborting their summit attempt).







Less steep approach to summit



### HUT FEES

The hut fees are \$10.00 per person per night. These are payable to the Marlborough Tramping Club ,  
 To make it easier for hut users to pay fees, reply paid and addressed envelopes are available in each hut, or at Gladstone Downs farmhouse. There are also wallet size cards in the huts with details for online payments.  
 Direct credited to [Westpac a/c 03 0599 0283288 00](#) Please ensure your name and hut fees is noted on the payment. An email advice of payment to the treasurer [Helen Miller](#) [lbhmmiller@xtra.co.nz](mailto:lbhmmiller@xtra.co.nz) would be appreciated  
 Please leave the huts clean and tidy after your use and carry out your rubbish.

### Hut Maintenance Requirements, problems or further information on the route.

[Kerry Millard](#),

Ph. 03 5788836, txt 027 307 540

Or [Steve Dyer](#)

Ph 03 577 6633

[Maurice Kennedy](#)

Ph. 04 970 7154,