beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club

www.mtsc.nz https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC

Issue 01. February, 2026

Club meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Street, Palmerston North (next to the Lido). Meetings begin at 7 pm.

7 pm Tuesday 3 February, 2026: Welcome Back Evening

Our first club night of the year will be a social event at the Lido clubroom. It's a time to catch up with friends, find out what they've been doing over the summer break and see photos from club trips over last year whilst enjoying a few drinks and a shared supper. Please bring a plate of finger food to share and drinks of your choice. We will have tea, coffee, Milo and biscuits as usual. There will also be a short film and a brief talk about trip planning. Hope you have had a great summer break & we look forward to seeing you all soon.

7 pm Tuesday 3 March, 2026: Track Clearing and Maintenance by Chris Teo-Sherell

18.12.25 Kiritaki Hut trip by Heather Knox

MTSC President: Nicki Fielder

president@mtsc.nz

I hope you have all had a great start to the year. 2026 is all set to be another great one, with trip rosters for the first half of the year already up on the MTSC web site. I'm imagining we will once again enjoy some fabulous day and overnight tramps, bike rides, and other adventures.

For the first time this year, we have a combined trip planned with a Wellington-based tramping club. Some of you may already have met members of their club while out tramping. Please put **12 March** in your calendars if you would like to join this trip. Jeff Baldwin is our contact person for further information.

I encourage you all to delve into the newsletters or check the calendar on our website to see what's coming up—or even suggest something new to be added.

On the social side, our monthly Club Night is a fabulous opportunity to get together, chat, and share ideas over a cup of tea, as well as enjoy the monthly presentation.

Our first Club Night is on **3 February** and is a great way to kick off the tramping year. Details can be found on page 1 above. If you would like a ride, please let us know.

I look forward to hearing about your adventures and seeing you out on the trails this year!

Nicki

More on upcoming trips on the MTSC website

February Wednesday Tramps				February Thursday Tramps		
28 Jan	Bill Milham	027 443 3324		29 Jan	William Laing	022 099 7988
04	Jenny Williamson	027 632 5035		05	Graham Irving	021 234 5736
11	Anne West	021 0266 6860		12	Royce Mills	021 055 2527
18	Marion Beadle	021 206 7046		19	Geoff Jameson	027 449 5851
25	Robyn Laing	021 267 8328		26	Rachel Keedwell	021 177 2790

February Cycling	
14 Feb	Beaconsfield Valley Circuit – Tip Leaders: Royce Mills 027 055 2527. More over page.
28 Feb	Wharite - Trip Leaders: Peter and Lynda 027 678 0747 More over page.

Trip Intentions: The email address for leaving trip intentions is intentions@mtsc.nz . Intentions sent to this address will not be acted upon UNLESS a party is reported overdue (e.g. by a family member, flatmate, friend, etc). The email is sent to several MTSC members. This information will be provided to Land SAR/RCC only if the party is reported overdue or a MTSC-owned PLB is activated. The email should include: a list of participants and their contact details; a brief description of the intended route and possible alternative routes; starting point; start date; date/time due out; vehicle registration; and any other relevant details.

Saturday 14 February, 2026: Beaconsfield Valley Circuit

Trip Leaders: Royce and Owen Mills

This is a repeat of a ride led by Chris Brunskill in April 2025. Only six riders met up and it was enjoyed by all participants, taking the group through some unexpected remote country scenery on gravel roads with a few photogenic historical buildings and relics along the way. Hopefully more can enjoy the ride this time.

Meet outside the Cheltenham Community Centre on Kimbolton road ready to start at 10 am. The route takes us through rolling hills on Beaconsfield Valley Road (sealed), then a remote gravel section of 4.5 km. The ride continues, all on sealed roads, to Waituna West. The rest of the ride is on quiet sealed roads returning to Cheltenham. The distance is 42 km, about a two hour ride. Details of the route can be found on the MTSC trips website.

Bring seats and a picnic to have at the little park and playground opposite Cheltenham General Store where ice creams, coffee and takeaways are available.
To sign up please contact Royce Mills 021 055 2527.

Saturday 28 Feb, 2026: Wharite Bike Ride

Trip Leaders: Peter Rawlins and Lynda Hunt

This ride is a classic. We will start at the intersection of Woodlands Road and Bushmill Road (GR 1843061 553428). From there it is a 10 km uphill ride with 760 m height gain to the Wharite transmitter tower. The great news is that it is a 10 km downhill ride with 760 m loss in height. We can then go for coffee in Woodville. The road was in good condition last time I went up which was in a two-wheel drive car. I will be doing the trip ahead of time so will have a better idea of the road closer to the date. For more information please ring Peter on 027 678 0747.

Saturday 14 March 2026: ZigZag Road - Ridge Road Loop Bike Ride

Trip Leaders: Peter Rawlins and Lynda Hunt

This ride will start from Lynda and Peter's place, 1031 Valley Road at 9:30am. We will head up Valley Road then turn right into Zig Zag Road, turn right onto Finnis Road, left onto Ridge Road, left onto Te Awa Road, left onto Coulter's Line, right onto Ridge Road, left onto Finnis Road, down to Pohangina, right onto Pohangina Road, and then right onto Valley Road again. Total distance 43.6 km. We will have tea and coffee at our place so bring something to share. For more information please ring Peter on 027 678 0747.

25-28 April, 2026: Anzac Weekend Bike Riding in Hawkes Bay

Trip Leaders: Peter Rawlins and Lynda Hunt

The plan for this trip is to have a sociable trip and ride some of the easy Hawkes Bay Trails. We plan to stay at the Napier Beach Top 10 Holiday Park (10 Gill Road Bay View). We've booked a cabin but they have campsites etc. as well. The plan is to travel up independently on Saturday morning to meet up at the start of the first ride at 11.30 am. This will probably be the Puketapu Loop ride, starting at the Pettigrew Green Arena car park. This is a 17 km ride and we can stop halfway for a coffee or lunch break at Puketapu. Depending on how we go, we might be able to do a second short ride along Marine Parade. On Sunday we will do the Tukituki River ride which is about 58 km. Monday will be the Napier Water Ride Loop of about 38 km. Of course, these rides may change due to weather. All the trails are easy and suitable for all types of bikes. For the evening meal please bring food to share and something you would like to drink. For more please information ring Peter on 027 678 0747.

Argyle Track tramp by Heather Knox 6.11.25

Wednesday 26 November, 2025: Cone Hut

Photographer and Reporter: William Laing

Twelve trampers set off in the van, ably driven by our professional driver Bill Milham, for the long trip to the Waiohine Gorge Road end. There we assembled for the walk to the historic Cone Hut, the second oldest hut in the Tararuas. The walk starts by crossing a magnificent swing bridge and dives into the bush, over a small stream and then upwards. The initial climb of about 300 m has a slope of over 35% with lots of tree roots to use as steps. Luckily it was dry so nothing to slip on. Towards the top the slope becomes easier, dips and then climbs again for a net climb of about 500 m, before the junction to Mt Reeves (hard to spot, just a slight track off to the left) and then a steep descent to Cone Hut (but not as steep as the climb). The bush is magnificent with many mature trees and lots of undergrowth and roots.

Cone Hut is made from slab timber, probably cut on site, with a typical bench sleeping area. It is perched high above the river. After a brief lunch at the rickety old table, we returned the way we came, up the hill to the peak and back down the steep track to the swing bridge. Luckily it was still dry so the going was not slippery and easy to descend. We were back at the van by 3.00 pm and Bill had the water boiling for tea. According to my app we had climbed a nett 850 m over 10 km. So the group were well exercised and the day enjoyed by all.

26-27 November, 2025: Tutuwai Hut

Trip Leader and Reporter: Christine Finnigan

Photographers: Christine Finnigan, Denise Shailer

We were 12, the weather forecast looked not too bad and we had a gps file thanks to Royce, plus three who had walked this alternative route before! So….. we set off from the Waiohine Gorge campsite just after 9.30 am heading up the Cone hut track. Within 100 m we crossed the Waiohine River on a long swing bridge then it was UP the hill. It was a classic Tararua start, steep for the first few 100 m elevation (actually about 300 m) before settling into a gentler uphill. It was lovely and mild and thankfully not the 28°C forecast for Masterton!

With the help of our experienced route finders we found the turn off to Mt Reeves at point 682. There's a small white marker on a tree saying Wall's whare. This is an occasionally marked track (no orange triangles) that takes about 2 hours to get to the Mt Reeves track (and another 200 m gentle climb), and has a few opportunities to get lost (but not us!!).

Approaching Mt Reeves

By this time the wind had got up and it challenged a few of us to stay on our feet and hold onto pack covers. We quickly moved into the shelter of trees and headed down to Tutuwai Hut - another 300 m drop. By this time the rain was moving in and by the time we got to the hut it was wet. The faster group took about 6 hours and the rest of us took at least another hour with lots of morning teas and lunch breaks!! The hut is in a pleasant spot on a terrace above the river. A group of Palmerston North Boys High School (PNBHS) students camped below the hut and we shared the hut with three teachers.

The route out the next morning formed a loop along the Tauwharenikau River track to Cone Hut and then followed the Cone hut track back to the car park (in the rain) – all back by 1 pm.
Thanks to a companionable group who were supportive and encouraging. It's so nice to be out in the bush….

We were Royce, Pam, Ken, Marion, Mary, Anja, Helen Christine, Geoff (above) plus Carole, Jenny and Adam

Thursday 27 November, 2025: Cone Hut Circuit

Trip Leader, Photographer and Reporter: Rachel Keedwell

Since the Thursday group had combined forces with the Wednesday group to do an overnight trip to Tutuwai Hut, I put my hand up to lead my first trip for those of us still keen to do a Thursday day trip. Heading in to Cone Hut sounded like a good idea, with the potential to catch up with the overnight crew as they made their way out from Tutuwai via Cone Hut. We ended up with just a small group of five and all jumped into Jeff Baldwin's car and headed out. It had started to drizzle as we set off but the temperature was so warm most of us didn't bother with raincoats because we figured we would likely get just as wet sweating under a raincoat. I had adjusted our intended route to do the circuit that goes up the river, across Cone Saddle and then back out to the road end, rather than just going in and out directly to Cone Hut.
We headed up the Lower Waiohine Track and I belatedly remembered how those sidle tracks up the river

valleys often take longer than they look on the map! We got to the junction with the Cone Saddle Track and, after about 20 minutes of uphill, one of our group was struggling with an injury and we realised we needed to turn back. Two of the party headed back down the hill while three of us stretched our legs for another 20 minutes of uphill, almost to the highpoint at 572 m then we turned back. The rain got progressively heavier and lunch time was a very quick affair! I didn't put my raincoat on at all and was completely drenched by the time we got back to the car.

I made several notes to myself after this first attempt at leading a trip — try the route first because my time estimate was likely well under, put a towel in my bag of dry clothes and always bring dry underwear! Completing that circuit is now on my to do list and I hope to lead the trip again next year with a more successful outcome.

Wednesday 3 December, 2025: Sledge Track Clayton's Trip Report

Trip Leader and Reporter: Catherine Cronin

Having done a couple of reccies in hot sunny conditions and imagining us swimming in the river after a long, hot day of tramping, it was not to be. After waking up at 6am on Wednesday morning to torrential rain and thunder, studying several weather websites, all of which at that stage where predicting maybe a bit of a break in the weather late morning and then more heavy rain all afternoon (which didn't quite turn out to be the case), a number of messages from a few people already pulling out of the tramp and a phone call to a lovely, helpful fellow tramper as to what I should do, I decided to cancel the day's tramping.
As a bit of a novice I really appreciated everyone's support and understanding in making this decision.

Wednesday 3 December, 2025: A Well Timed Outing - Pettifar Walk

Trip Reporter and Photographer: Ewen Cameron

After a bit of dithering about going out or not, following Anne's suggestion, we departed at 8:30 am for a tramp in the Totara Reserve area. We did some of the Pettifar Loop before heading off track and into the river bed for morning tea and a look around. We had a shortish but fun time. For most of the trip we were under the canopy being dripped on, but we had bright sunshine too. In parts, it was very wet and swampy underfoot. In others it was beautiful, freshly washed bush. The only person who got really wet was me.....from the soles of my boots upwards to upper thigh. This was achieved by misjudging the depth of a ditch/creek which Anne and Rod had crossed using a fallen log: past experience suggested the log wouldn't support me so I found an "alternative"..... Not a good plan.

The photo is of Anne and Rod at morning tea... hot in the sun in a near cloudless day, no sign of either the deluge that had been nor the one coming. Fortunately for us, we were well on our way home before the big cloudburst...

Thursday 4 December, 2025: Hidden Lake

Trip Leader and Reporter: Jenny McCarthy

Photographer: Heather Knox

Eight of us set off from the Putara Road end. We had morning tea at the top of the hill at the turn off towards Roaring Stag. Three of us had checked out the route on the previous Sunday and we easily identified the place we had chosen to leave the main track. This was a relatively easy off track section down the Ruapae Stream. We crossed the stream easily and it was quite refreshing getting wet feet. The compass led us to the lake flat and then a small rise up to a terrace from which we went down to the lake. The bush was very lush with lots of ferns and some wonderful forest, especially the Rimu trees. We had lunch beside the lake and then retraced our steps back to the car park. It took us 7.5 hours to do the trip including breaks.

Thank you to Brian and Rachel for doing the trip twice in one week and to Vaughan, (Jenny – Leader), Alistair, and Adam, Geoff and Heather (Photographer) for joining us.

Wednesday 10 December, 2025: Stanfield Hut

Trip Leader and Reporter: Bill Milham

Photographers: Cheryl Dawson, Denise Shailer

After a call from Mary the day before the tramp regarding Ken's unfortunate fall and early return home I was happy to drive the van and fill in to lead on the day. With a clear sky and no wind 21 keen trampers gathered at the car park at the end of Tamaki West Road at the start of a perfect tramping day. After a short briefing and a head count we set off up Holmes Ridge.

The ground conditions on the steepish climb were excellent and we all soon reached the formed farm track and continued on the easier, steady climb. We stayed more or less as one group, pausing often to regroup. This allowed those first timers to enjoy the ever changing landscape. As the morning progressed the temperature rose so, on reaching cover, a morning tea break was taken. Heading into the bush as we slowly descended it was a little cooler but there was no decent breeze. We reached the river and some of us were grateful for the cooling of the water as we meandered upstream towards the hut.

An early lunch was enjoyed in the shade adjoining the hut and we all had a well earned spell. The hut was spic and span due to a recent tidy by Marilyn and Cheryl. Lunch over it was decided that we would head back via the river and this was certainly a good choice as the day was becoming a scorcher. The river route was different to what I remembered due to recent flooding. It is amazing the effect water velocity can have on the environment when there is a storm in the area. The day progressed well and we continued to pause frequently in the shade and some refreshed themselves in the cool river water. We all arrived safely back at the car park in good time.

marble leaf looked amazing

A very nice day in the hills with the river walk and, for some, a first time experience, a feature for us all to enjoy. Thanks to the car drivers and to all who participated.

Thursday 11 December, 2025: Otaki Forks

Trip Leader and Reporter: William Liang
Photographers: Carolyn Brodie, Heather Knox, William Laing

Eleven of us travelled to Otaki Forks for a short walk and a shared lunch at the Otaki Forks camp ground. About half climbed for two hours towards Field Hut; the rest walked up the Waiotauru River track. We grouped under a tree in the shade for a shared lunch which was enjoyed by all.

Wednesday 17 December, 2025: Klein Track Walk and Christmas Lunch

Trip Leaders and Reporters: Cheryl Dawson and Marilyn Hewitt

Photographers: Denise Shailer and Cheryl Dawson

The annual end of year Christmas tramp was held at Anzac Park, Norsewood. Twenty eight adults plus two of Christine's grandchildren came along. Eighteen walked the Klein track with the remaining ten going directly to the park. It was not the best weather but we managed to keep dry until, as predicted, the rain came at 1.30pm so we all packed up and headed home. Thanks to Geoff once again for driving the van and also thanks to Margaret McKenzie for making the Christmas cake which was delicious as usual.

It was a great day with lots of chatter and amazing food.

Merry Christmas to all!

Cheryl and Marilyn

Stanfield Hut tramp 10.12.25 by Cheryl Dawson

On steps from L to R: Judy Swainson, Robyn Laing, Marion Beadle, Alison Gustafson, Jenny Williamson, Margaret McKenzie, Richard Hunter, Jenny Bucknell, then Anne West, Geoff McKay, Marilyn Hewitt, John Salisbury

Saturday 13 December, 2025: Cycling a Marima Loop

Trip Leader: Tim Swale
Reporter: Mary Mercer
Photographers: Jenny McCarthy, Royce Mills

Eleven cyclists set off from Mangamaire Hall, soon after 9 am, west along Tutaekara Road. Fortunately the traffic was not heavy and we were soon rolling down hill and across the Mangahao River. Then we turned left onto the unsealed Kopikopiko Road which takes a big loop uphill away from and then back downhill to the Mangahao River. There are impressive views of the river and rolling farmland en route. Then it was on to Pukeho Road to the tiny township of Hukanui. From there left turns into Doherty, Pukewhai and Mangamaire Roads took us back to Tutaekara Rd and our vehicles at Mangamaire Hall. We had ridden 30 km and climbed 350 m in just over one and a half hours.

From there we drove to the Marima Reserve adjacent to the Mangahao River for a picnic morning tea. This is not a wildly attractive area but eventually we found a place where we could all enjoy our muffins and drinks and watch our trip leader, Tim, actually take a swim in the river. The temperature was not exactly conducive to this sort of activity or, at least, that was what the majority thought! Nonetheless it was an enjoyable outing.

Thursday 18 December, 2025: Kiritaki Hut

Trip Leader, Photographer and Reporter: Rachel Keedwell

The Thursday group supposedly had their final tramp of the year and shared lunch at Ōtaki Forks on the 11th of December, but some of us decided that it wasn't Thursday without a tramp. Jenny kindly offered to lead a trip to Kiritaki Hut the following week, walking in from the east via Fairbrother Road. The first part was across farmland and the ground was ankle-breaking terrain due to the heavily pugged soil covered in long grass. It was much easier going once we hit the forest park boundary and started following up the Oruakeretaki Stream. I didn't count all the stream crossings but it was at least 20+ and not the sort of tramp where you could keep your feet dry. The boulders gradually got bigger and we passed through some lovely gorges and pretty scenery. A couple of places had ropes and a section of chain to enable us to climb up and around some boulders and deep pools. The entrance to the bits of track that were alongside the river were marked in a novel fashion - either a cairn of rocks painted red (too bad for those colour blind trampers!) or with lovely pink ribbon, with only the occasional orange triangle or piece of flagging tape.

After morning tea, we set off up the hill and I swear it was a 1:1 gradient initially. There was much heavy breathing and scrabbling with hands and feet and use of the occasional knee for those in the party with shorter legs. The track was fairly easy to follow, and marked more conventionally with orange track markers but the scratchy, overgrown undergrowth near the top left me wishing I had worn long pants. It took us about three hours to get to the hut for an early lunch. Nice views were to be had out across the Tararua district as the passing showers had stopped once we emerged from the bush. Going down was definitely quicker because we didn't have to stop for breathers and we dispensed with some of the side tracks spending more time walking in the stream. If it had been a warmer day, there were plenty of options for taking a dip, with regular pools all the way down. A couple of eels were spotted and Heather tried to drown her second phone in a week by taking an involuntary dip. A great trip to end the year - a bit challenging, lovely scenery, and excellent company!

Monday 5 January, 2026: Kiritaki Hut from Fairbrother Road and Sea-Mac Track

Trip Leader and Reporter: Geoff McKay

Photographers: Pam Menzies, Christine Finnigan and Geoff McKay

"This is a bit of an adventure!" was an expression I heard more than once as we searched for track markers, negotiated multiple stream crossings with slippery rocks and water over our knees, climbed over the big boulder with the chain and rope, going off track and finding our way back on the descent from the hut, getting stung by ongaonga nettle and falling over in the river. - All part of the fun!

Eleven of us met at the car park at the end of Fairbrother Road: 8 from the MTSC Wednesday Trampers and 3 Dannevirke Hut Lovers led by Pam Menzies. After a quick chat with two deer hunters who pointed out the trail on the hill (where they had dragged their catch from an early morning hunt) and giving radios to the leader and tail-end-charlie, we set off on our adventure around 8 am on a beautiful clear day. Over the style and across the paddock we went, immediately getting wet feet from the dew on the long grass. We then negotiated our way up the Oruakeretaki Stream and after what seemed like forever, we finally reached the sign which pointed to the SeaMac Hut.

After some jubilation and a photo, the majority set off up the track through the bush to the hut while a smaller group of us rested for a while to recharge our batteries. Once feeling better, we also set off up the track and reached the hut to find Pam's Hut Lover Team hard at work while the rest of our MTSC trampers were enjoying lunch and the great views to be had up there on such a glorious day. Pam's team did sterling work making the hut all spick and span! Such dedication is to be greatly admired and appreciated! Check out Pam's posts on the Kiritaki Hut facebook group and the Love our Huts facebook group. After lunch, the MTSC group set off on the return journey, leaving the Dannevirke Hut Lovers to complete their loving. We all came back together at the SeaMac Hut track sign and set off back down the river. Angela Cameron was determined to go down the river at the big boulder spot rather than use the chain and rope but, after spying the water fall and the deep water, decided that the chain and rope was the better option after all!

After what was a long, challenging but enjoyable day, we finally all made our way safely back to the car park and I bet we all slept well that night!

Thank you all for your great company and special thanks to Pam's Hut Lover Team!

Contact Details for Committee 2025 - 2026

President	Nicki Fielder	022 515 3807
Secretary	Blair Petersen	027 600 4263
Treasurer	William Laing	022 099 7988
Chief Guide	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475
Membership	Anne Jolly	021 067 5898
Newsletter Editor	Mary Mercer	027 372 5375
Lodge Manager	John Lyttle	027 433 6307
Mini-Bus Manager	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475

General Committee: Howard Nicholson**,** Rob Pringle, Anja Scholz

Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475	
Gear Custodian	Rob Pringle	020 426 2176	
Ski Captain	Rob Pringle	020 426 2176	
Social Convenor	Tim Swale	022 134 8384	
Wednesday Trips	Rod McKenzie & Marion Beadle		
Thursday Trips	William Laing		022 099 7988
Biking Trips	Nicki Fielder		022 515 3807
Website Administration	Howard Nicholson		027 294 1941
Lodge Food Coordinator	Howard Nicholson		027 294 1941
Facebook	Rob Pringle, Karen Tutt, Howard Nicholson	facebook@mtsc.nz	

New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Seconder who are current MTSC members and have been so for at least one year. New memberships are confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting. Prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. For further information or an application form please see the club website.

Club Equipment

Hire equipment: we have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, tent flies (small and large), snow mats, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies and two bivvy bags. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. We have three personal locator beacons (PLB) for which there is no charge. Contact the Gear Custodian: Rob Pringle on 020 426 2176.

Website https://www.mtsc.nz/

This contains club information, photos, contact details and back issues of this newsletter, Beechleaves. The club website is maintained by Howard Nicholson 027 294 1941.

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC

Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mount Ruapehu

The lodge is close to Iwikau Village, has power, heating, hot showers and is stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome. The lodge can be booked online. The best way to pay for your bookings is to go to the Wallet top up page where there are full instructions, then make a bank transfer to the MTSC account (your Wallet is stored credit); this may take a day or two to be processed. The alternative is to pay by credit card but the club will be charged a fee of approximately 3% fee for each transaction For group rates contact the booking officer. If you need help check out Booking the Lodge Help Page. The current rates, which include main meals, are:

	Members	Guests
19+ yrs (Adult)	**$50**	**$75**
12-18 yrs (Youth)	**$40**	**$60**
5-11 yrs (Child)	**$32**	**$52**
0-4 yrs (Pres-school)	**$0**	**$0**