beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club

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

Issue 03. March, 2026

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

7 pm Tuesday 3 March, 2026: Southern Ruahine Tracks

by Chris Teo-Sherell & Kyle Burmeister

For several years now, the southern Ruahines, despite being right on our doorstep, have been so choked with leatherwood that few people venture there. Chris and Kyle, along with a number of others including past MTSC member, Ian Ritchie, had a vision that would see a route along the tops between Wharite and Kiritaki Hut being opened up. They have put in untold hours of hard labour to create a walkable route that links the two, plus re-cutting side tracks to Coppermine Creek and Pohangina No 1 and 2 Lines. Come and hear about their progress and get a sense of what a massive achievement this has been.

Tunupo Tramp on 20 Nov, 2025 by Heather Knox

MTSC President: Nicki Fielder president@mtsc.nz

Although it's still officially summer, the weather seems to have a mind of its own — from hot, sunny days to howling winds and unexpected rain. It's a timely reminder to stay prepared for all conditions when we're out adventuring. Ken touched on this and other aspects of safety at our first Tuesday Social Evening of the year. It was a fabulous and relaxed catch-up and the Pot Luck Supper proved to be a great way to kick things off. A big thank you to Richard for sharing stories from his recent Arctic adventure — I think we all found them fascinating, and his photos were simply stunning!

Do you have an adventure or passion related to tramping, skiing, biking, or another outdoor pursuit that you'd like to share? Or do you know someone who does? We'd love to hear from you at a future club social evening. Presentations can be anywhere between 10 and 30 minutes. If you're interested, please get in touch with Tim Swale (Ph: 022 134 8384).

On 1 June, there will be a $3 increase in adult and youth lodge rates. Fees have remained unchanged for several years and this adjustment will help cover costs associated with using Stripe as a new payment option. One of our members suggested supporting the Grassroots Trust Rescue Helicopter which is currently fundraising to purchase a new winch. The Club has donated $250 towards this important cause. They provide an incredible community service — one that some of our members have directly benefited from. Given the number of members involved with Land SAR, this feels particularly relevant to our club values.

Wishing everyone happy and safe adventuring,
Nicki

More on upcoming trips on the MTSC website

March Wednesday Tramps				March Thursday Tramps		
04	Angela Cameron	027 464 7404		05	Anja Scholz	027 449 5851
11	Jan Eyre	027 321 9732		12	Jeff Baldwin-see over	027 448 4483
18	Anja Scholz	027 749 5811		19	Jo Arnott	027 203 1090
25	Alan Hawkins	021 062 4106		26	Jenny McCarthy	021 215 2197

Cycling	
14 March	Zig Zag Road – Ridge Road Loop – Peter Rawlins 027 678 0747 (Details below.)
25-28 April	Anzac Weekend Bike Riding in Hawkes Bay – Peter Rawlins 027 678 0747 (More below.)

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.

Thursday 12 March, 2026: Combined Tramp with Kaumatua Tramping Club

Trip Leader for MTSC: Jeff Baldwin 027 448 4483

There will be two choices – Easy and Medium – both starting and finishing at the Kiriwhakapapa Camp Site.

Easy:

Out and Back trip along the old Tram Track and continuing on the Mikimiki Stream Trail and back. We are looking for a leader for this group.

Medium:

This involves some off trail tramping (similar terrain to going off trail when we have tramped to Te Mara high point from Mikimiki Trail). At the beginning we will follow the Blue Range Track very briefly and, at the second bridge, turn left immediately and continue on the Loop Track. Once we get to approximately 360 m we will go off trail and head up the spur to 510 high point. From there we'll continue up the spur, above streams on both sides, eventually meeting the main track up to Blue Range hut at 770 m. From there we will descend on the main track back to the Kiriwhakapapa campsite car park. This is a new walk for most of us but very do-able. It will take a total of 5 to 6 hours.

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 similar 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 be an adapted Water Ride of about 35 km. Start point is the carpark behind the Petane War Memorial gates, approximately 100 m past Onehunga Road on the left as you travel north on State highway 2 north of Napier. If you get to Bayview you have gone too far.

On Sunday we will do the Tukituki River Ride and add a side trip to Clifton. This ride is about 50 km. Monday will be Puketapu loop of 18 km with the option of riding to the coast and back for an additional 28 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 ring Peter on 027 678 0747. Please let me know if you are on WhatsApp as I will be setting up a group for the trip.

We welcome the following new members to the club: Dianne Attwood, Leonie Landsheer and Robyn Hannah.

Wednesday 28 January, 2026: Kapakapanui Hut

Trip Leader, Photographer and Reporter: Bill Milham

The weather was fine and the day looked promising as our group of 18 gathered at the road end to head up to the hut. Some chose to keep their boots dry so, after nine crossings of the Ngatiawa River and a change of footwear, the steady climb began. The approximately 700 m ascent was uneventful and, although muddy in a few places and a little steeper in others, 13 of the group reached the hut in good time, where a leisurely lunch was deserved and enjoyed. We were entertained on the way by the loud, screeching call of a Long-Tailed Cuckoo which seemed quite close at times.

The weather continued to improve and we had a clear sky and the odd view on the descent. At around 500 m, Alison slipped, fell face-down in a steep section and injured her left wrist. Nurse Denise was quickly on the job and, with skill and reassuring manner, applied the club splint and bandage to stabilise the injury. Next it was our SAR man, Ken, who phoned the police via 111 and, after he outlined the situation, Terry set off a PLB so the police had our group's precise location. The police agreed that a helicopter** was the only practical and safe way to get medical attention for Alison. With effort from some of our group a small access point through the canopy beside the track was created, a blue tarpaulin laid out and a ponga tree shaken so the pilot could see exactly where we were, despite the dense foliage. When the helicopter arrived, it hovered overhead while a rescue crewman, Adam, was lowered down to prep Alison for winching. After the helicopter had done several circuits, it returned to winch Adam and Alison back up into the helicopter and fly her to Palmerston North Hospital. The whole procedure took just two hours and the five trampers who had descended earlier were able to view the action from the road end. Those who stayed to help continued on their way down and arrived back at the van where a quick review of the incident was shared.

We all headed home a little weary but pleased that Alison had been taken care of in the best way possible considering the circumstances. My personal thoughts were that, as a group, we are very fortunate to have highly skilled people around us so that, when faced with the challenge of an injured party in difficult terrain, the outcome is more likely to be successful. Thanks to Ken and Marion for driving.

***The Rescue Helicopter is trying to raise another $38,570 to refurbish the rescue winch and help saves lives in our community. If you donate before 31 March your gift will be doubled. You can call The Grassroots Trust Rescue Helicopter on 0800 11 10 10 to donate securely over the phone or you can head to their web site at rescue.org.nzgtrh to give on line. It's certainly a service which can prove invaluable to trampers no matter how skilled or careful! See also*

https://rescue.org.nz/grassroots-trust-rescue-helicopter/news/

Rescue Helicopter above Kapakapanui Track by Jenny Bucknell 28.01.26

Thursday 29 January, 2026: Holdsworth Pinnacles

Trip Leaders and Reporters: William Laing and Alistair Hall

Photographers: Heather Knox and William Laing

The first official tramp of the year for the Thursdays group was selected to offer the options of either an easier tramp to Atiwhakatu Hut for those who were inclined and a harder tramp to the Pinnacle Peak on the other side of the river. Five choose the easier tramp, while seven climbed the steep route to the Pinnacle and down the long ridge to the river to complete the circuit.

The Pinnacle

The route to the peak and down was less than 12 km long but the climb was arduous (at least for this reporter, the leader). The other six seemed to fly up the 577 m climb to the rocky pinnacle with its magnificent views of Holdsworth, Powell Hut and Jumbo hut. However the wind was fierce and we did not linger long. As we had already had morning tea just before the top, out of the wind, we quickly descended 60+m and then climbed to peak 862 where a clearly marked arrow indicated the direction of travel. In spite of this, we set off in the wrong direction, heading down a ridge towards the next valley. Using his compass and map, Brian soon spotted the mistake, so we retreated back to the arrow, and followed it down to the next saddle and up again to peak 846 where, this time, we turned left and headed towards the Te Whakaturakau Stream and Donnelly Flat on the other side.

Apart from the leader taking a spectacular tumble and throwing hits stick about 10 m down the track making it hard to find, we made good time and soon reached the stream. It was flowing a bit faster than normal due to the recent rain though we had blue skies, sun and a lot of wind. We carefully crossed the white water which was up to our knees depending on how tall you were. (Being short is an advantage getting under wind blown trees but I believe height compensates during river crossings

and enabling big steps.) We climbed the far bank, helped by the knotted ropes there and then scrambled further up from the old path to the gravelled major highway back to the car park.

It was a tramp, I believe, enjoyed by all. We are a bit puzzled by the change in bush age as we got close to the river and the consensus was there must have been a fire there some time ago. While many young trees have regrown, there is little undergrowth.

Atiwhakatu Hut

Five trampers, including one visitor from England, had an enjoyable walk up to the Atiwhakatu Hut and back. The slip on the way had been active again and a section of track had disappeared under a wide strip of mud, but the weather had been kind and the mud had dried enough to allow us to find a reasonably solid route across. We arrived at the hut at about 11:30 am for an early and leisurely lunch, with some of us sheltering behind the hut to be out of the wind. Realising that the group climbing the Pinnacle would be back well after us, we split up on the way back and used the extra time in different ways: heading back to the van to enjoy a quiet relax or a crossword, taking an extra walk/climb up towards the Holdsworth lookout, or walking back slowly to enjoy the surroundings and take lots of photos. It was a good day out in lovely surroundings.

Thanks to the driver, Jeff Baldwin, who spontaneously stopped for ice creams on the way back.

Wednesday 4 February, 2026: Waikupa Valley

Trip Leader and Reporter: Jenny Williamson

Photographers: Royce Mills and Denise Shailer

A van load and two cars of trampers arrived at the Okoia property of Grant and Clare Adkins on a fine but windy morning. Clare announced that she was 'not very fit' but she seemed to have no trouble on the initial, vigorous climb while many of us were puffing and blowing. Muddy churnings from bovine hooves had made the ground quite uneven so she had warned us to take care. At the top we caught our breath while taking in an impressive down-valley view.

There was much variety: steep hills, pine forest, flat cropping land and the intriguing cave built by hand for early settlers to escape from rampaging Maori. It was never used and the local, peaceful tribe would not enter it. I guess the glow worms might have made the site 'tabu'.

In addition to cattle and sheep, diverse agricultural activities feature on this farm including coppiced poplar stems for land stabilisation and the spray-free pumpkin seeds and their by-products, oil and flour. (See https://summerhillseeds.co.nz/) We were shown the labour-intensive process for seed harvesting and treated to samples of the moreish finished product which many of the group purchased. Those who were there will be pleased to hear that The Farm Shop in Feilding now stocks Clare's products. She prefers to deal with small local buyers rather than the bigger stores.

Thanks to everyone who came along and to drivers, Mary Mercer, Marilyn Hewitt and Jan Eyre.

Thursday 5 February, 2026: White Cliffs Boulders

Trip Leader and Reporter: Graham Irvine

Photographers: Jinny Andersen, Royce Mills, William Laing

On a sunny morning, ten of us set off in two cars for an epic day out at the Boulders in Rangitikei. We paused at Ohingaiti to coordinate as to which point of entry we were taking. We settled on the northern entry at Mangarere Road as Graham had made arrangements with the Robb family to meet there and proceed through the farm from that end. It was a beautiful day with no wind and we soon warmed up as we climbed steadily through the farm tracks to our destination. We had morning tea at the Boulders and explored from there. The Boulders are hidden gems of sandstone rock formations, nestled within an enclosure of native bush and are well worth trek to see. They are estimated to have been formed about 2.5 to 3 million years ago, and look like the home of The Flintstones.

We spent some time there, had lunch and enjoyed the stunning scenery on the edge of the Rangitikei River. The walk back seemed longer as the heat of the day became more intense. This was eased a little by the troops indulging in some ripe blackberries which were growing on the hill alongside the road back to the homestead. To complement this, we found it necessary to stop for an ice cream at Hunterville on the way home which rounded off a very satisfying and relaxing day out. It was noted that we walked 9.5 km in all and spent about three hours at the Robb's property.

My thanks to William and Royce for assisting me in co-ordinate this trip and for Lia and Bryce for providing us with safe travel.

Wednesday 11 February, 2026: Burtton's Track

Trip Leader and Reporter: Anne West

Photographer: Cheryl Dawson

White climbing rata

We had 22 trampers for our trip along Burtton's Track. It was good to drive through the Gordon Kear forest almost to the start of the track, thanks to PNCC allowing us key access. The track rafts installed last year have eliminated most of the muddy bogs: well done to all those who volunteered and helped with this project. We encountered several TA walkers, and were pleased that our packs were not as big and heavy as theirs.

Most of us stopped for lunch beside the Tokomaru River while a smaller group continued on to climb the next hill. The forest was lovely and the cicadas in full voice, the sound of summer. It was hot walking back uphill in the afternoon.

A big thanks to our drivers who negotiated all those ruts and potholes on Scott's Road.

Hericium novae-zealandiae
or tooth fungus

Thursday 12 February, 2026: Paekakariki Escarpment Track

Trip Leader and Reporter: Royce Mills

Photographer: Heather Knox

A perfect day was enjoyed by our group of 11 trampers. It was fine, warm and calm giving us great views along the way. There were three options: five of us chose to walk from Paekakariki to Pukerua Bay and catch the train back. Four walked as far as Muri Station then retraced their steps walking back over the Escarpment track to Paekakariki. This was the longest (in time) and hottest option and a swim was very much enjoyed on their return. Two walked on to Plimmerton via the Taua Tapu Track and then caught the train back to Paekakariki. Waiting for the various groups to return was very pleasant; most of us had an ice cream, and/or coffee and a swim. Many thanks to Brian Webster for driving the club van.

Brian Webster on the way back

Saturday 14 February, 2026: Beaconsfield Valley Circuit

Trip Leaders: Royce and Owen Mills

Photographer and Reporter: Royce Mills

It was a grey, drizzly morning but this did not deter 16 bike riders from meeting up to set off from Cheltenham just after 10am. We started by heading north on Kimbolton Road then taking the first left, Haynes Line. This is a nice, quiet, sealed road that eventually led us onto Beaconsfield Valley Road through rolling hills. Then the gravel uphill "fun" began - rather slushy in the wet. This was quite a remote section

leading, eventually, to more fun, a downhill, now on the sealed Waituna Tapuae Road, into Waituna West. From here, we made a left onto the Cheltenham - Hunterville road (SH54). The ride returned via quieter roads: Williamson Rd, Dunolly Rd, then Cheltenham Cross Rd, before rejoining SH54 for the last downhill into Cheltenham.

There is some lovely farmland scenery along the way as well as a few photogenic historical buildings including an old sawmill and other relics of farm machinery. Too bad this was not a day for stopping and taking photos. In fact it was quite foggy on the highest parts of the ride, reducing visibility down to about 50 m. Thankfully it was not cold, there was no wind and the rain stopped while we were biking back to Cheltenham.

Top marks to everyone who took part and commented that they had enjoyed this ride of 42 km, taking about 2 1/2 hours including stops to regroup several times.

Wednesday 18 February, 2026: Tunupo

Trip Leader & Reporter: Marion Beadle
Photographer: Carolyn Brodie

Our small group split into two smaller groups; the gentle group going a short way along the Irongate Hut track and then back and down to the Oroua River. Most of the other group had lunch at about 1245 m with a grand view and pleasant conditions.

There was no fresh windfall from the recent storm. Several 'not normally there' streams had appeared on the bridge to hut section and the Tunupo track was good travelling apart from well known old windfalls and very wet ferns making for very wet shorts. The Umutoi Creek was high and loaded with silt possibly indicating a slip further up stream?

Thanks to van and car drivers.

Thursday 19 February, 2026: Rangi Scenic Reserve and McKean Pinetum

Trip Leader and Reporter: Geoff Jameson

Photographer: William Laing

Eighteen people signed up but a last minute defection due to ill-health reduced the number to 17 who dispersed into the van and two EVs. The day was cool and partly sunny (i.e. mostly cloudy) – perfect tramping weather. The three-hour loop in Rangi Scenic Reserve passes through magnificent unfelled bush filled with huge mature rimu, kahikatea, matai, miro, totara, tawhairaunui (red beech), tawhairauriki (black beech), huge rewarewa, maire and hinau and all five of NZ-Aotearoa's tree ferns (ponga, mamaku, kātote, whekī, and whekī ponga). The native orchid was not flowering.

People who had not seen this lush mature bush commented "way beyond expectation" and "stunning". One of our group, the niece of Lia, had very recently arrived on a working holiday from the Netherlands. As we neared the end of the loop, just prior to noon, there was some vigorous discussion as to where to have lunch – in the bush or at the Pinetum. - The leader decreed, with minimal mutinous murmurings, that lunch would be in the bush and the front runners would choose the spot, which was in the bush overlooking farmland. This bush is lovingly tracked, trapped and the flora labelled by the community of Rangiwahia, in particular Steve and Mary Bielski, with minimal support from DOC.

After a leisurely lunch stop, we all visited the McKean Pinetum which none of us had visited and most of us had passed by numerous time en route to the Rangiwahia Hut Track. Outside their native habit high up in desolate mountains of western states of the USA, the near immortal bristlecone pine trees were luxuriantly foliaged. The Pinetum is the largest collection of conifers in the Southern Hemisphere and most trees were grown from seed smuggled into NZ, luckily without the pests that are found in America and Europe.

If anyone would like to make a donation here are the details. Account is Rangiwahia Hall, number 06 06290 0082269 01. Give name and code – Rangiwahia, reference - Reserve. *Note: the Give-a-Little page is no longer active.* Those who also used the facilities at the Rangiwahia Hall are particularly encouraged to make a donation.

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**