

Walk of the Month



Welcome to 10,000 Steps Northland's 'Walk of the Month'. Each month a stunning walk somewhere in Northland will be highlighted. If you have a favourite track or walk in your community contact us by email at 10000steps@sportnorth.co.nz.

July's Walk of the Month – Ruapekapeka Pa (Whangarei)

Ruapekapeka Pa Historic Reserve is the site for the historic last battle of the Northern Wars fought between British colonial forces and northern Maori. The site is recognised as one of the most significant historic sites in New Zealand and is a fascinating place to visit for anyone passing by.

The reserve is managed by the Department of Conservation in conjunction with the Ruapekapeka Pa Management Trust and encompasses the Pa and main British positions from which the battle was fought.



The reserve can be reached by turning off State Highway 1 just north of Towai (it is well signposted) and by following the metal road for about 5km to a recently upgraded large carpark.

The reserve is well kept and tracks and signs are easy to follow. The area has been upgraded in recent years where new interpretation signs were installed, tracks from the British camp to Pa improved and erection of a waharoa (carved gateway) created.

Upon arriving, you will appreciate the great views overlooking the surrounding area and get an understanding for why this site was chosen and stood to be the finest and strongest fighting Pa of Chief Te Ruki Kawiti.

The tracks leading up to Ruapekapeka Pa from the carpark are gravelled and wide which will suit any ability. It is slightly uphill, however stopping along the way to read the interpretive signs and the ability to look at the very visible trenches, means it is more of a meander. You are welcome to go off the track and onto the open grass space and explore the pa trenches and defences more closely.

As you move from the British camp towards the Pa, you pass through the impressive carved waharoa signifying a gateway to the sharing of the stories from all sides of the battle, allowing people to enter the pa site in the right spirit, giving it the respect it deserves. It is from here you can appreciate the extensive network of trenches and tunnels and the Pa defence system.

Towards the back of the Pa you have the option of entering into Timperley's Bush Scenic Reserve to see the giant Puriri tree. If you decide to do this, follow the orange triangles

along the fence line and then into the bush. It is a short 10 minute diversion – please note that the track is narrow and slippery in places following rainfall.

The total distance of the walk including the diversion to the Puriri tree is 2,000 steps (1.6km). Although short, you can spend quite a bit of time here learning the history of the battle and area. There are also a couple picnic tables near the carpark you can make use of.

This site is a well worth the diversion off the main highway.

For more information visit the Department of Conservation website www.doc.govt.nz.