

SIR EDMUND HILLARY OUTDOORS EDUCATION TRUST

# TONGARIRO

## PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES



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# WELCOME

This booklet outlines the main activities we can facilitate at Hillary Outdoors Tongariro. We want to provide opportunities for participants to try new activities and connect to their natural environment.

Due to our location in the UNESCO Dual World Heritage Tongariro National Park, the safety expertise of our staff, and our concession with DOC, we have almost unlimited options for places to explore, activities to do with our clients, and consistently include debriefs as part of the learning process.

Activities are a medium to facilitate focus areas and learning outcomes for each group. Participants will have the opportunity to expand their comfort zones with the safety, support and encouragement of our instructors and their peers.

*“People do not decide to become extraordinary.  
They decide to accomplish extraordinary things.”*  
– Sir Edmund Hillary



Centre left - Sir Edmund Hillary, right - Sir Graeme Dingle



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# LOW ROPES



## WHAT IS IT?

Various problem-solving activities include Spiders web, balance logs, small rope swing, tyre swings, and more.

Team members will safely spot each other to keep each other safe while tackling the elements.

## WHY DO IT?

These activities are often done near the start of a programme to set the scene and give participants an insight into how they can begin to operate as a successful team.

By doing a series of these challenges, with guided reflection, groups can quickly progress in their functioning and learn how to review their performance.

Often, instructors may get their group to revisit specific problems during the week to identify how far the team has developed or to work on a particular area of development within the group.

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# ABSEILING



## WHAT IS IT?

Abseiling is a way of descending a rock face on a rope. Rock climbers often use it to access a climbing area or to return to the ground after completing their climb.

At Tongariro, we have plenty of exciting venues to pick from, both in the bush and in the mountain.

Participants use a friction device to control their speed as they descend the abseil rope while their instructor manages a safety rope.

## WHY DO IT?

A perfect opportunity to increase confidence and expand participants' personal comfort zone.

Participants will practice patience and encourage their peers.



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# CANADIAN CANOEING



## WHAT IS IT?

Students either travel in pairs in individual canoes or make a raft out of two boats, which is a little more stable and easier to manage.

Canoe journeys often form part of our overnight expeditions and are an ideal way to travel through and appreciate the local environment. Canoes are also an excellent way of introducing non-swimmers and those with a fear of water into boating activities.

## WHY DO IT?

This activity is fantastic for developing communication skills and showing empathy and patience.

It provides opportunities to develop leadership and team skills and options to work on navigation skills or develop paddling skills to a higher level.

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# INFLATABLE MAVERICK KAYAKING



## WHAT IS IT?

Mavericks are two-person inflatable river kayaks that are perfect vessels for an introduction to whitewater kayaking. Students are taught some skills, rescue techniques and river safety in the morning before embarking on a journey down the Grade 2 section of the Tongariro River.

Spills and thrills are all part of this adventure, reserved for our older and more confident students and only during the warmer months of the year.

## WHY DO IT?

This activity provides opportunities to push participants out of their comfort zones, learn about risk management and leadership skills, and develop their communication skills to work effectively with their partners and as part of the group.

This activity is really good fun and will be something to remember for a long time!



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# BUSH & CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES



## WHAT IS IT?

Various activities may include navigation skills, bush travel, river travel, river crossings, shelter building and survival skills, learning about the local flora and fauna, and how to look after them.

Students may get the opportunity to participate in conservation efforts, assisting with emptying and setting traps, which are an important part of protecting the area's rare Whio (blue ducks).

## WHY DO IT?

The bush environment defines the New Zealand outdoors. Our staff will share their knowledge and take students to off-track places. Students will learn the "Leave No Trace" Principles and increase their cultural and environmental awareness.

Plenty of leadership opportunities exist, and groups work as effective teams to complete their missions.

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# CAVING



## WHAT IS IT?

Many people have never been able to go underground, so caving is popular with many of our groups. Hidden in the Tongariro Forest Park are the Okupata and Pukehinau cave systems. These limestone caves provide an underground experience where students travel through the cave system under the supervision of their instructor. Challenge by choice is the order of the day; there are options of taking a challenging squeeze or choosing an easier route so that all the students complete the same journey but at a level that is comfortable for them.

## WHY DO IT?

The underground environment is the perfect place to teach and give opportunities to put into practice all the things that Hillary Outdoors is about. For many participants, there is a level of anxiety about caving. So, it lends itself perfectly to opportunities to push outside comfort zones and realise that you can overcome your fears. Students often think that they won't like or be able to do things they have never tried before; caving teaches them that if you give things a go, those preconceived ideas often do not ring true. The underground environment catalyses developing communication, trust, group management, and leadership skills. It provides an opportunity to put these skills into practice in a real environment.



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# HIGH ROPES



## WHAT IS IT?

Our purpose-built high ropes course comprises a large variety of individual elements, from balance beams, hire wires, and a big swing to team challenges.

Participants are safeguarded by ropes managed by their peers under the careful supervision of a Hillary Outdoors instructor.

## WHY DO IT?

The high ropes course allows participants to push themselves outside their comfort zone and overcome their fears. As students safeguard each other, they learn how to give and receive support in a trusting environment.

The high ropes course also lends itself to team challenges, where groups can build on what they have learnt in the low ropes or other team-building activities and put the theory into action while they are also dealing with the pressure of working in a more challenging environment.

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# MOUNTAIN DAY



## WHAT IS IT?

An appreciation for the unique beauty of this volcanic environment and a respect for the area's cultural history is part of the teaching every mountain day, whether the focus includes tramping, rock climbing, or abseiling.

Days spent in the mountains could be spent tramping to a significant feature such as a high point or a waterfall or doing an activity such as rock climbing or abseiling.

## WHY DO IT?

Spending a day in the mountains is a fantastic way to connect with nature. A mountain day provides opportunities for personal challenges and the need to function as a team member and understand and appreciate the physical and emotional challenges that other teammates may face.

Participants will need to be willing to both offer and receive support. Mountain days can often be described as 'Type 2' fun. While many students, given a choice, would choose activities with immediate rewards for their efforts, after a big day out in the mountains, there is excellent learning that sometimes hard work over a period of time is needed to get the reward.



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# SEA KAYAKING



## WHAT IS IT?

Our double sea kayaks offer another opportunity to get out onto the water and explore either Lake Otamangakau or Lake Taupō and tend to be used more with our older students or adults.

Once basic skills and capsize drills have been taught, participants will go on a journey that could be just for the day or an overnight expedition.

## WHY DO IT?

Sea kayaking offers all the learning opportunities that our other journeying activities offer and a chance to visit some of the areas on Lake Taupo that are only accessible by boat.

Just like a mountain day, often, students' a real appreciation of what they have achieved retrospective, as travelling in a sea kayak does require some effort and determination.

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# TAWHAI FALLS JUMP



## WHAT IS IT?

An exciting jump into the moving water below. Tawhai Falls is a 13-metre-high waterfall in the UNESCO Dual World Heritage Tongariro National Park.

Tawhai Falls is also the location of the filming location of Gollum's pool, where Faramir and his archers watch Gollum fish.

This activity is suitable for senior school students or keen year 10 students and above.

## WHY DO IT?

Personal challenge. While some participants are used to this kind of activity, many participants are apprehensive about doing the jump but get immense satisfaction once they have made the commitment and often come back for a second go.



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# SIT ON TOP KAYAKING



## WHAT IS IT?

Participants learn kayaking skills on our one or two-person sit-on-top kayaks either on Lake Otamangakau or Lake Taupō. These skills are then used to go on a journey and/or participate in a series of fun games and team challenges with opportunities to develop further skills along the way.

Some students may venture up to the weir, where they can learn some white-water skills in a safe and controlled environment.

## WHY DO IT?

Flatwater kayak sessions provide the foundation skills before heading on a journey or going on a river trip later in the course.

Participants learn about water safety and have opportunities to experience the local hydroelectricity scheme which is an integral part of our environment, and this opens great opportunities to discuss sustainability and link this to their responsibilities during their stay and everyday lives.

Journeying in the kayaks gives ample opportunities to work on various skills, including leadership and communication.

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# ROCK CLIMBING



## WHAT IS IT?

Many participants will have climbed at an indoor rock gym, but climbing outdoors in the mountain environment on real rock is a whole different experience.

Soak up the mountain environment at one of our many rock climbing venues while testing yourself at various rock climbs depending on your skills and level of challenge.

You will be safeguarded by a rope managed by your peers under the careful guidance of one of our instructors before being lowered back down to the ground.

## WHY DO IT?

Personal challenge, pushing your comfort zone – rock climbing is the perfect activity.

Clear communication and developing trust within peer groups are also key to success in this activity, as they will be belaying each other as they climb and descend.



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# FLYING FOX



## WHAT IS IT?

An impressive zip line high above the Mangatepopo River.

## WHY DO IT?

This activity is a personal challenge that also requires teamwork, as participants must work together to pull each other back across the river.

It's a popular choice with groups because it helps individuals face their fears in a supportive environment. This challenge is often more accessible for students who may struggle with the physical component in the high ropes, ensuring that everyone can take part and feel a sense of achievement.

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# OVERNIGHT EXPEDITION OR LONG DAY



## WHAT IS IT?

The **overnight expedition** can take place in the bush, on the mountain, or on the water. Students usually sleep under fly sheets or in tents, but they may also build shelters or dig snow caves. In bad weather, local DOC huts may be used. The expedition could involve a long, physically demanding journey, or it might focus on different activities, like shelter building and spending extended time in nature with peers.

### Long Day

Groups will carry camp stoves and their ingredients for an evening meal. After dinner they will make their way back to base to sleep.

## WHY DO IT?

The overnight expedition is a fantastic finale to the week, allowing students to utilise the hard and interpersonal skills they have learnt throughout the week. Students may work together to plan an overnight expedition with their instructor's guidance to meet their individual group's learning outcomes. Students have a sense of ownership and the associated sense of achievement when they accomplish their goals. The overnight expedition also gives the groups time to reflect on their learning, which is often the most memorable aspect of their time at Hillary Outdoors.