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# TUSSOCK BUSTERS INVADE ARMY TRAINING AREA

**By John Archer**

More than one thousand trail bikers from all over the North Island enjoyed perfect weather when they explored the far reaches of the Waiouru Training Area during Tussock Buster 09. The event was a fund-raiser for the Linton Multi-Sports Club, and was organised with the aid of the Waiouru Sports Council. A large team of club members spent several days before the event setting out thousands of trail markers and ensuring all the trails were safe.

The riders camped on the Waiouru rugby grounds and followed a carefully designed one way system that involving 150 km of tracks. These allowed them to explore such notable features as Tarn Track, Marsden Range, Argo Valley, Westlawn, the lower Moawhango Gorge ("the Ho Chi Min Trail") Waiua Pa, Three Kings, Rogers Ridge, the Moawhango Intake, Edinburgh Castle and Baggush.

A large number of club members and other volunteers manned gates, kept radio comms, did patrol sweeps of the trails, cooked food, supplied fuel in remote locations, provided first aid and tidied everything up at the end of the weekend.

The gate prices included a family discount, and this allowed a large number of young people to experience these trails. These youngsters were skilful and careful riders and usually a parent was close behind. "Drop it into third and then give it some throttle," a four year old was instructed as his mother followed him out of a sharp corner on the kiddie course. Then when a slightly build 14 year old stalled on a steep uphill grade; a big burly dad was quickly on the spot to get his daughter going again. And three dads cooked a group evening meal while five tired-looking young boys rested in the back of a camper. "They rode 80km today," said one dad proudly. "They'll sleep well tonight."

And so family bonds were strengthened, a remote and beautiful area was made accessible to hundreds of city folk, money was raised for young soldiers following minority-interest adventure sports, and best of all, there were very few accidents, with only one person being hospitalised. More pictures can be viewed at [archerpix.com](http://archerpix.com)

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