



## Media release

15 March 2013

### **Mt Ruapehu Summit Hazard Zone Restriction Lifted**

The advisory warning people not to go within the 2km Summit Hazard Zone on Mt Ruapehu has been lifted.

DOC's Ruapehu Area Manager Jonathan Maxwell says allowing guided trips and day visitors to once again trek to the summit is great news.

However visitors into the summit zone are strongly advised not to go past the Dome Equipment Shed or anywhere inside the crater basin within 400m of Crater Lake. "We have been very pleased that visitors have listened to our advice during the heightened period of volcanic activity over the past months and not gone into the Summit Hazard Zone. There is still opportunity before winter for people to make the trek to the summit, but they should still heed the warning to keep out of crater basin," said Jonathan.

People are also strongly advised not to camp anywhere inside crater basin or on the summit plateau. As always people should stay out of the major lahar paths in the Whangaehu and Whakapapaiti valleys.

The decision to lift the advisory warning visitors not to enter the Summit Hazard Zone, has been made for a number of reasons. Most importantly the temperatures in the vent system some hundreds of metres below Crater Lake have returned to normal and there have been no volcanic earthquakes lately that would raise concerns. The Crater Lake temperatures have warmed slightly. In addition volcanic gas concentrations in the air above Crater Lake are at normal levels as well.

DOC Conservation Analyst Dr Harry Keys said, "Monitoring of Mt Ruapehu will continue and the Department of Conservation will be regularly updated with information from GNS and the GeoNet programme. However the public must be aware that Ruapehu is a living volcano and has shown to be unpredictable in the past. It is important that people understand the advice not to go within crater basin and certainly not down to the shore of Crater Lake. Even a very small burp beneath the lake could produce a sizeable wave across it or sideways jets of water which could endanger anyone standing on the lake shore or in the crater basin."

With the summer months coming to an end the weather will become much cooler very quickly and visitors are asked to prepare themselves well when planning a trip to the summit. Information on the trek to the summit and updated weather can be picked up from the Whakapapa Visitor Centre.

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Background Information

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