



Alpine National Park

- *the high country*

around Bright, Mount Beauty, Omeo and Dargo

The Bogong and Dargo High Plains and associated alpine peaks are part of a unique Australian alpine environment. Victoria's highest mountain, Mt Bogong (1986 m) and second highest, Mt Feathertop (1922 m) dominate the subtle, broad undulating high plains. Combined with extremes in weather, these features provide some of the most spectacular landscapes and recreational opportunities in Victoria.

Getting there and getting around

The area is situated approximately 365 km north-east of Melbourne or 90 km south-east of Albury-Wodonga.

From the south access is via the Great Alpine Road, from Bairnsdale to Omeo and Mt Hotham or the Dargo High Plains Road from Dargo to Mt Hotham. From the north access is via the Bogong High Plains Road from Mount Beauty or the Great Alpine Road from Bright to Mt Hotham.

Please remember that mountain roads are often narrow and winding and due to cold conditions at any time of the year, potentially slippery and icy. Snow chains must be carried during the snow season and fitted where directed.

Plants



Snow gum woodlands give way to alpine herbfields, a delight in late spring and summer.

The Bogong and Dargo High Plains contain the most extensive and botanically rich area of alpine vegetation in the Victorian Alps. Small changes in aspect, wind, cold air drainage, water, soil and rock type create a mosaic of plant communities such as mossbeds, herbfields, heathlands and Snow Gum woodlands.

Fire In The Alps

During the summer of 2003 a number of fires swept through the Australian Alps from Mt Buffalo to Namadgi. Burnt visitor facilities and directional signs will be replaced with the exception of some historic huts, which may remain as ruins. If planning a visit to a hut check it has not been destroyed by fire. Over time the natural environment will recover although some alpine (ie mossbed & wetland) and subalpine (snowgum & alpine ash) communities will take longer to regenerate.

Please keep to tracks and trails especially in the fire affected areas. Regeneration of sensitive burnt areas will be assisted without the additional impact of trampling.

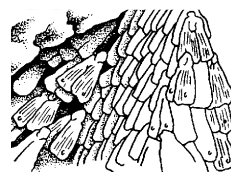
Animals

These habitats support a variety of animals such as the rare Mountain Pygmy possum, Broad-toothed Rat, Bush Rat, Brown and Dusky Antechinus and Lesser Long-eared Bat.



Common bird species are the Australian Kestrel, Flame Robin, Little Raven, Pied Currawong and Richards Pipit. Reptiles in the alpine environment include the White-lipped Snake and Alpine Copperhead.

An interesting insect, the Bogong Moth inhabits the high plains and peaks between November and April - away from the heat of the inland plains.



Bogong moths

Bogong Moths shelter in rock crevices where they provide food for Mountain Pygmy possums and Little Ravens



Parks Victoria Ranger

"Victoria has all the outdoors you could wish for – mountains, forests, beaches and bushland, all preserved in our parks. Our natural landscapes have been here longer than anyone knows, and together we can make sure they're here forever."

For more information call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963 or visit our website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
13 1963
or visit the
Parks Victoria website
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Parks Victoria offices at:

Bright (03) 5755 0000
Mt Beauty (03) 5754 4693
Dargo (03) 5140 1243
Omeo (03) 5159 0600

Caring for the environment

Help us care for your parks by remembering these guidelines:

All native plants, animals, archaeological and historic sites are protected by law

Take rubbish home with you. "Carry out what you carry in".

Dogs and other pets are not permitted

Always check fire danger forecasts. No fires (including stoves) on days of Total Fire Ban.

Use a portable stove instead of lighting a fire, especially above or near the treeline

Fuel Stove Only Area. Due to vegetation damage and visual scarring no campfires are to be lit on (any of the access tracks to) Mt Bogong and Mt Feathertop

Firearms are only permitted in accordance with Hunting Regs

Choose a firm, dry, well-drained camp site at least 20 metres from any water courses.

Use of vehicles, including trail bikes, is restricted to existing roads and tracks.

Vehicles must be fully registered and drivers licensed.

Do not pollute waterways with refuse, detergent or human waste. Use existing toilets or bury your waste at least 100m from any waterway or camp sites.

Enjoy a visit to a hut but do not use them for accommodation. Always carry a tent.

Water - be self-sufficient and treatment of any water collected is recommended.

Cross Country Skiing

The high country of the area boasts some of Australia's finest ski touring country, from well defined and groomed trails near the resorts to the winter wilderness of the Dargo High Plains.

Popular localities include areas adjacent to the Falls Creek and Mt Hotham Alpine Resorts such as the Bogong High Plains, JB Plain and the Mt Loch area.

Mt Bogong, The Razorback, Mt Feathertop and the Dargo High Plains are visited by more experienced skiers.

Downhill Skiing and Alpine Resorts

The alpine resorts of Falls Creek and Mt Hotham, adjacent to the Alpine National Park, are managed by separate resort management boards, and are not part of the Alpine National Park.

These areas have been set aside to provide accommodation and facilities for downhill skiing, snow boarding and other snow based recreation.

Setting up camp

Dispersed bush camping is permitted throughout the area, except within 200 metres of the Bogong High Plains or Pretty Valley roads.

If you prefer the use of toilets, picnic tables and fireplaces the following camping areas are provided:-

- JB Plain between Hotham Village and Dinner Plain on the Great Alpine Road
- Buckety Plain, Raspberry Hill and Langfords West (horse yards) on the Bogong High Plains east of Falls Creek
- Mountain Creek at the foot of Mt Bogong near Tawonga

When camping you should be fully self sufficient with food, water and camping equipment. Enjoy visiting the huts but do not rely on them for accommodation - they may be difficult to find or already occupied.

Huts

There are nearly 60 huts and hut ruins in the area, many of them historic having been built by early graziers, miners or government authorities.

Wallaces Hut (built in 1889) on the Bogong High Plains is typical of the bush architecture employed by the cattlemen of that time. Some huts are still used for the original purpose by families whose ancestors built them.

Fires

Firewood supplies are limited especially in the alpine and subalpine areas so the use of camping stoves is preferred.

Mt Bogong, Mt Feathertop and approaches are fuel stove only areas.

In other areas if you must use a fire, keep it small and within fireplaces provided. No fires, including camp stoves, may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

Tour guides

A number of commercial tour operators run tours (4 wheel driving, nature rambles, bushwalking, horseriding and rafting) in this area.

Contact Tourism Alliance Victoria for details on (03) 9650 8399 or visit their website www.tourismalliance.com.au.

Take care!

All visitors, and especially walkers, should realise that weather conditions can change rapidly in alpine areas.

Snowfalls can be experienced at any time of the year and water can be extremely scarce

Always be prepared with:

- Warm clothing
- Wind and waterproof jacket
- Gloves, hat and strong footwear
- First aid kit and sunscreen
- Energy food and water
- Compass and relevant topographical map

Also, please keep your group small (4-8 people).

Before you go, let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return and fill in the intentions book provided.

Please keep to walking tracks, particularly in old gold mining areas where there may be mine shafts.

Other publications

For more details and extensive coverage of the Alpine National Park see the following maps and publications:

Touring the Victorian Alps 1:140,000

VicMap 1:50,000 Bogong Alpine Area

Vicmap 1:50,000 Dargo Plains - Cobungra

Vicmap 1:50,000 Howitt - Selwyn

Alpine National Park Parknotes

- *Source of the Rivers*
Around Mitta Mitta, Omeo, Tallangatta & Corryong
- *Our Mountain Heritage*
Around Heyfield, Licola & Dargo
- *Valleys & Bluffs*
Around Mansfield & Whitfield
- *Wilderness & the Snowy*
Around Benambra, Buchan and Bonang
- *Horseriding Parknote*

The Australian Alps Walking Track and Alpine National Park by John Siseman (Pindari Publications)

Explore the Australian Alps - car touring guide to the Australian Alps national parks by Australian Alps Liaison Committee (New Holland Press)

In the Past

Many Aboriginal groups / people have a remarkably rich history of Aboriginal use in the Victorian Alps and a vast knowledge of the cultural sites, oral history and ancestral stories that relate to the Alpine region of Victoria. Throughout the many seasons each year, Aboriginal groups would come from as far away as the coast and south west slopes, to meet with the tribes of the mountains for intertribal ceremonies and feasting on Bogong Moths. During these festivities they would exchange cultural objects and materials for tools. Aboriginal sites such as shelters and campsites provide a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal connection with the high country. Throughout the Alps their custodianship still endures.

Following in the footsteps of explorers such as John Mitchell and Baron von Mueller, miners and graziers pioneered the mountains in the 1850s in search of gold and suitable summer pastures.

The value of the mountains for recreation and tourism was realised as early as the 1880s with the establishment of the Bright Alpine Club and numerous Government hospices.

In 1939 the SEC began work on a major scheme for electricity generation in the Kiewa Valley. The aqueducts, Rocky Valley and Pretty Valley dams on the Bogong High Plains are all part of the scheme which was completed in 1961.



Explorers, miners and graziers used horses in their search for gold and summer pastures

Enjoying the Park

Car Touring

The main attractions of the high country are easily accessible in a 2WD conventional car. The Dargo and Bogong High Plains roads and the alpine resorts of Mt Hotham and Falls Creek provide walking and skiing access. The alpine scenery from the Great Alpine Road over Mt Hotham is particularly spectacular.

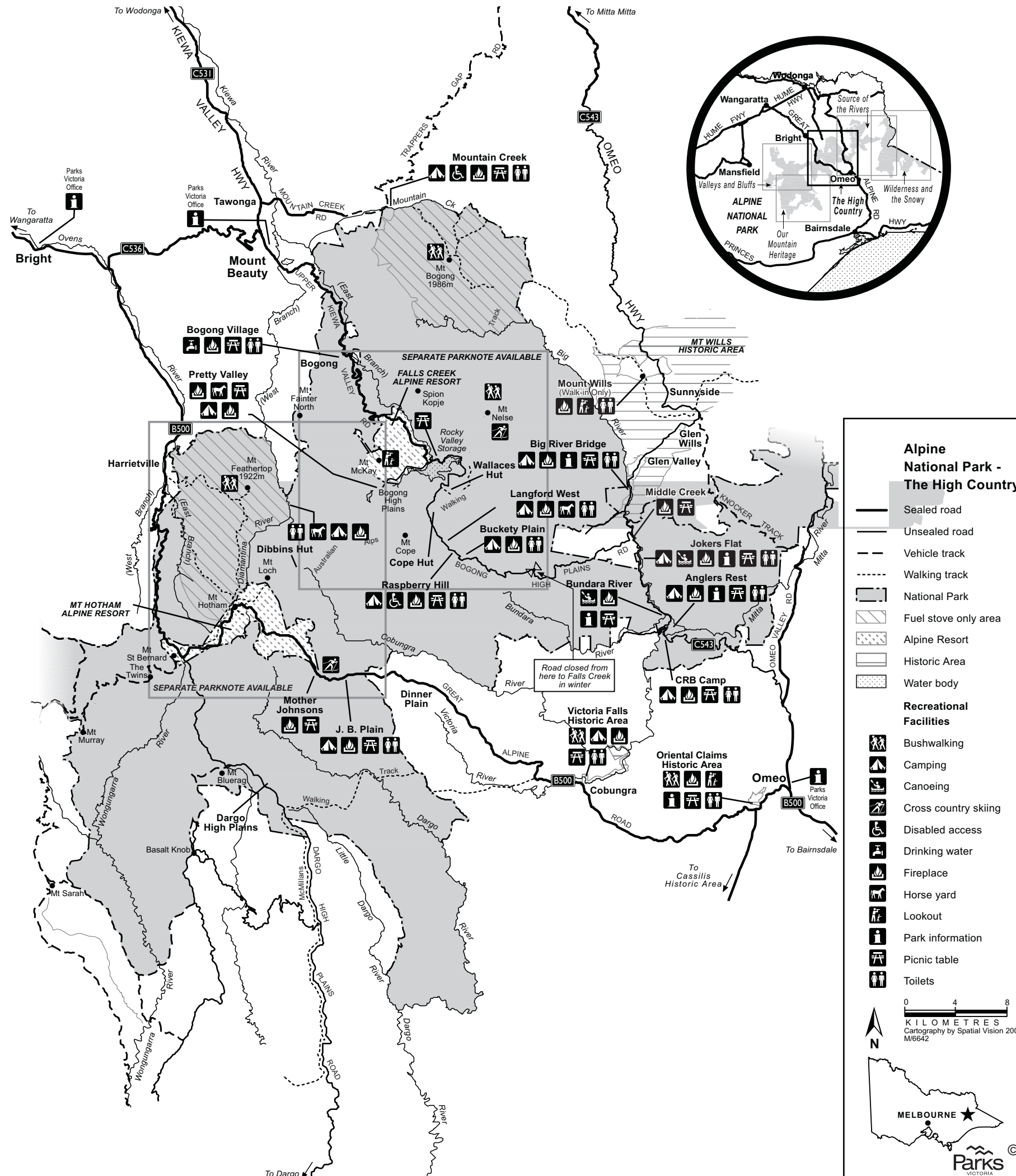
If you have a full day (overnight is even better) it is possible to drive the Great Alpine Circuit (250 km) which follows the Great Alpine Road between Bright and Omeo, linking with Falls Creek and Mount Beauty via the Omeo Highway and Bogong High Plains Road.

The Dargo High Plains Road, although suitable for 2WD conventional cars, can be rough and dusty in sections and slippery after rain.

The Bogong High Plains and Dargo High Plains roads are closed by snow in winter and many of the four wheel drive tracks accessing the Barry Mountains are seasonally closed between early June and late October.

Please remember:

- check road conditions before setting out
- vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public
- wheel chains must be carried and fitted where directed during snow season, June to September inclusive



Walking

Some of the best mountain walking country in Australia is found in the Alps. Some tracks are suitable for day and weekend family walks; others are long, rough and challenging.

Shorter family walks can be undertaken to Mt Loch, along the Hotham to Dinner Plain Trail, Ropers Lookout, Wallace - Cope Hut circuit, Heathy Spur and Mountain Creek.

Longer more challenging day and overnight hikes are the Razorback or Bungalow Spur to Mt Feathertop, Tawonga Huts and the Fainters, and Staircase Spur or the High Plains to Mt Bogong.

The long distance Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes through the area on it's 650 km journey between Walhalla (Gippsland) and Tharwa (near Canberra).

This 'track' varies from a four wheel drive track along the Barry Mountains to a foot pad across the snow grass plains of the high country, from Mt Hotham to Mt Bogong.

Bushwalking along the AAWT and other longer routes is only for fit, experienced self reliant walkers.

Walking Track Parknotes

- Walks around Bogong High Plains
- Walks around Feathertop, Hotham and Dinner Plain

Walkers must be self sufficient with food, water, first aid and camping gear and be skilled in the use of maps and compass.



On Horseback

Horse riding is popular during summer and autumn, especially on the Bogong High Plains. Restrictions apply to group size and the location and timing of rides to minimise the impact on the environment and other park visitors.

Where riding is permitted, permits are required for horse riding parties larger than five. Riding in alpine and subalpine environments is permitted only between 1 December and 30 April inclusive.

Mountain Bike Riding

The Dargo and Bogong High Plains offer some great opportunities for exploration by bicycle. Track surfaces vary from sealed roads to steep, rough four wheel drive tracks. Cycling is not permitted on walking tracks.

The following roads and aqueducts are available for bicycle riding:-

- all public roads, except if seasonally closed
- Rocky Valley, Cope East, Cope West, Langford East and Langford West aqueducts
- all management vehicle only (MVO) roads, except for Spion Kopje Track