

Alpine National Park



Our Mountain Heritage - around Heyfield, Licola and Dargo in the Wonnangatta - Moroka area

From the time people first set foot on the Australian continent, they have sought the Alps for social, spiritual and survival reasons.

Their presence in these wild and wonderful mountains has left us a rich cultural heritage - from the rock scatters of the Gunai/Kurnai people on lofty vantage points, to grazier's huts nestling in protected folds of the high country - we are surrounded by our mountain heritage.

Getting there and getting around

This area of the Alpine National Park is situated approximately 250 km east of Melbourne along the Princes Highway to Traralgon, then north east to Heyfield.

The main access is from Licola (north of Heyfield) via the Tamboritha Road, which leads to the Howitt and Moroka Roads.

Please remember that mountain roads are often unsealed, narrow and winding. Take care as roads may be slippery at any time of the year.

Away from the main Howitt and Moroka Roads many tracks are suitable only for experienced four wheel drivers, with many closed seasonally between early June and late October.

Car touring by 2WD

It is possible to visit many mountain heritage sites in a 2WD conventional vehicle. Three popular heritage drives are:

The Pinnacles - Moroka Road (91 km, 2 hours Licola to Pinnacles, one way)

The highlight is a high rocky crag called the Pinnacles. On a clear day the view takes in the Gippsland Lakes to the south, and Mt Hotham to the north, and beneath the lookout the settled areas of the Wonnangatta Valley. Other features along the way include Moroka Lookout, Moroka Hut and Horseyard Flat Camping Area.

Howitt and Snowy Plains - Howitt Road (82 km, 2 hours from Licola, one way)

Superb alpine and sub alpine scenery with expanses of colourful fragrant herbfields and snow grass plains are a highlight along the way. Other features include Snowy Plains Airstrip, Dimmick Lookout, Bryces Gorge and Guy's Hut, Howitt Hut and Mt Howitt Walking Track.

Grant Historic Area (17 km, 0.5 hours from Dargo)

A short drive north from Dargo along the Dargo High Plains Road will bring you to McMillan Road and the Grant Historic Area. This thickly forested area hides many features of the mining days including cemeteries, township sites and mining relics. McMillan Road is steep, narrow and rough beyond Grant, and is best accessed by 4WD vehicles, but the haunting Talbotville township site on the Crooked River is a great reward for those who explore further.

Four wheel drive tours

There are many 4WD trips in the area, some of the more popular ones being the Marathon Road to Castle Hill (off Moroka Road), the Zeka Spur to the Wonnangatta Valley and around the historic Eaglevale and Talbotville regions.

Please remember:

- check road and track conditions before setting out
- vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public
- many roads and tracks are closed seasonally for environmental and safety reasons

Fishing

The major streams and rivers such as the Wellington, Macalister, Wonnangatta and Caledonia Rivers, provide good fishing opportunities. A closed season may apply to trout fishing so be sure to check when you purchase your inland fishing licence.

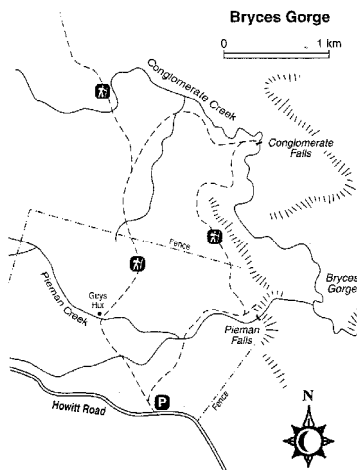


Walking

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, requiring a high degree of bushwalking skill and stamina. Shorter family walks can be undertaken to Dinner Creek Gorge, Mt Arbuckle, Neilson Crag, Guys Hut and Bryces Gorge (half day).

In the Grant and Talbotville area there are several walks exploring historic sites such as Jolly Sailor Mine and New Good Hope Mine.

Longer more challenging day and overnight hikes can be undertaken to the Wonnangatta Valley, Mt Howitt, Tali Karng and the Moroka Gorge.



Cross country skiing

Cross country skiing is popular in the Lost Plain - Holmes Plain area. From Lost Plain a 4 km ski trail passes over Mt Arbuckle, with good views from the summit. More experienced skiers can explore the extensive, but remote open snow plains, particularly the Snowy and Howitt Plains.

A four wheel drive vehicle may be necessary to access the areas along the Tamboritha Road. Even then a relatively arduous walk may be necessary to reach skiable snow past the seasonal road closure on the Howitt Road.

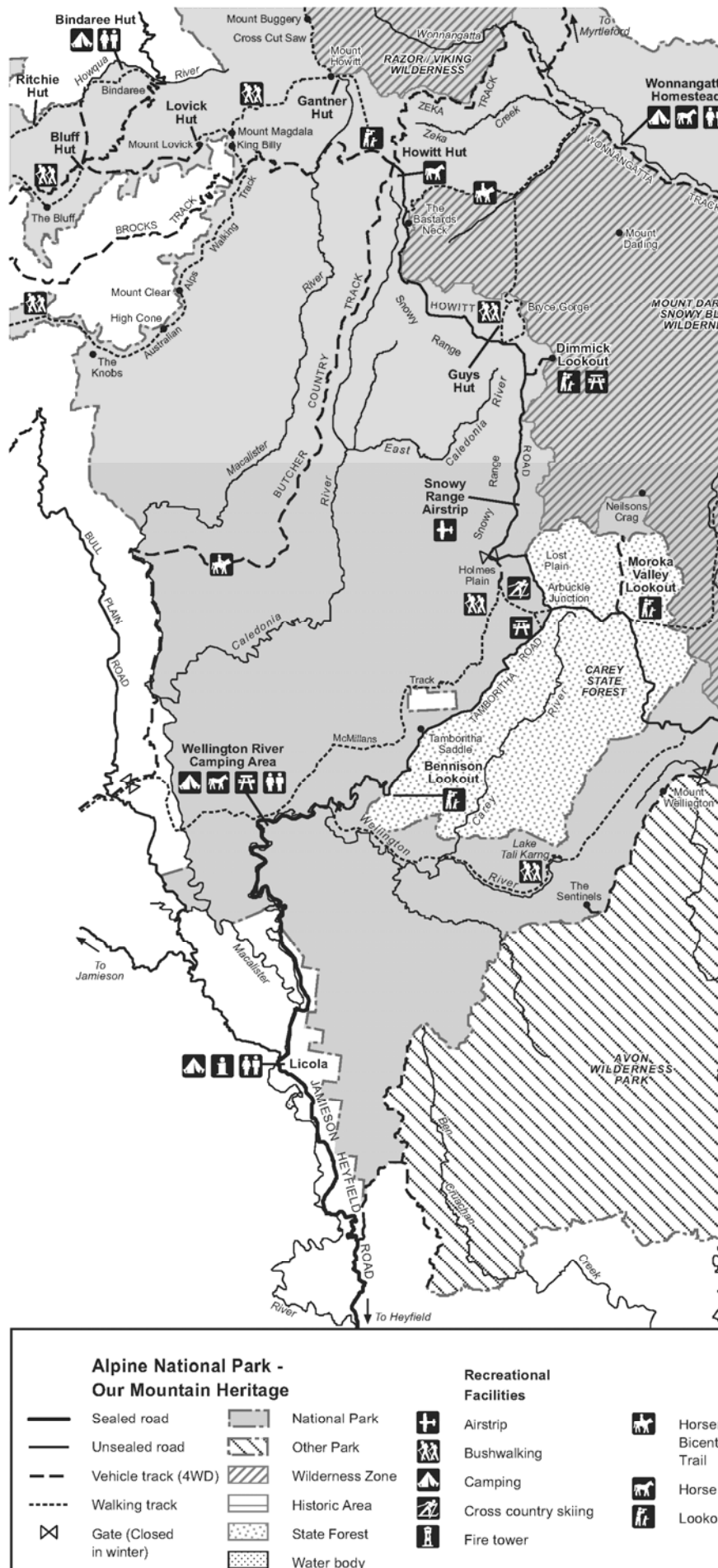
On horseback

Horseriding is popular during summer and autumn, especially along the Bicentennial National Trail, which passes through the Wonnangatta Valley on its journey between Healesville (Victoria) and Cooktown (Queensland).

Horses must be held in the Wellington River yards when in that area of the park. There is a horse route from there to the start of the Tali Karng Track. Horses are not permitted on the shores of Tali Karng.

Various controls apply to group size, and the location and timing of rides, to minimise the impact on the environment and other park visitors.

For further information refer the Horseriding Park Note or the Australian Alps Horse Riding Code.



Setting up camp

Dispersed camping is permitted throughout the area, but make sure you are at least 20 m from any lake, river or stream. If you prefer the use of toilets, picnic tables, and fireplaces, the following camping areas are provided (no bookings are required):

- **Wellington River.** 15 numbered camping areas beneath shady peppermints and manna gums, toilets located at some sites. Horse yards at site 12. Tamboritha Road approximately 10 km from Licola.
- **Horseyard Flat.** Set amongst Black Sallees on the banks of the Moroka River.
- **Eaglevale.** On the Wonnangatta River below the towering ramparts of Mt Kent and Snowy Bluff.
- **Wonnangatta Valley** (4WD access only). Near the historic site of the Wonnangatta Homestead.
- **Talbotville** (4WD access only). On the grassy flats of the Crooked River.
- **Grant.** A grassy clearing in the forest and all that remains of a once thriving gold mining town.

When camping you should be fully self sufficient with food, water and camping equipment. Always carry a tent. Huts are for emergency use only.

Huts

There are many old huts in the area, some of them historic. Moroka (1946), Guy (1940) and Howitt Huts (early 1900's) are all easily accessible and reflect the grazing history of the area.

Enjoy a visit to a hut, but do not rely on them for accommodation as they may be difficult to find or already occupied. Please help look after them.

Fires

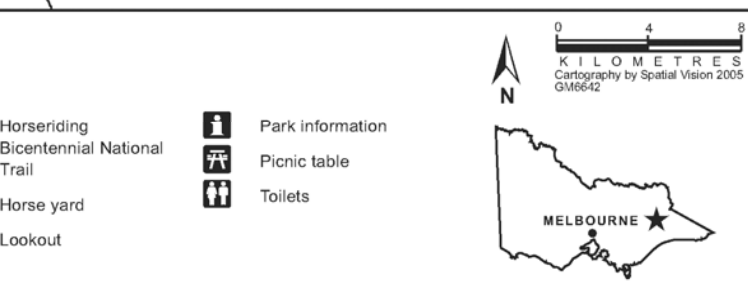
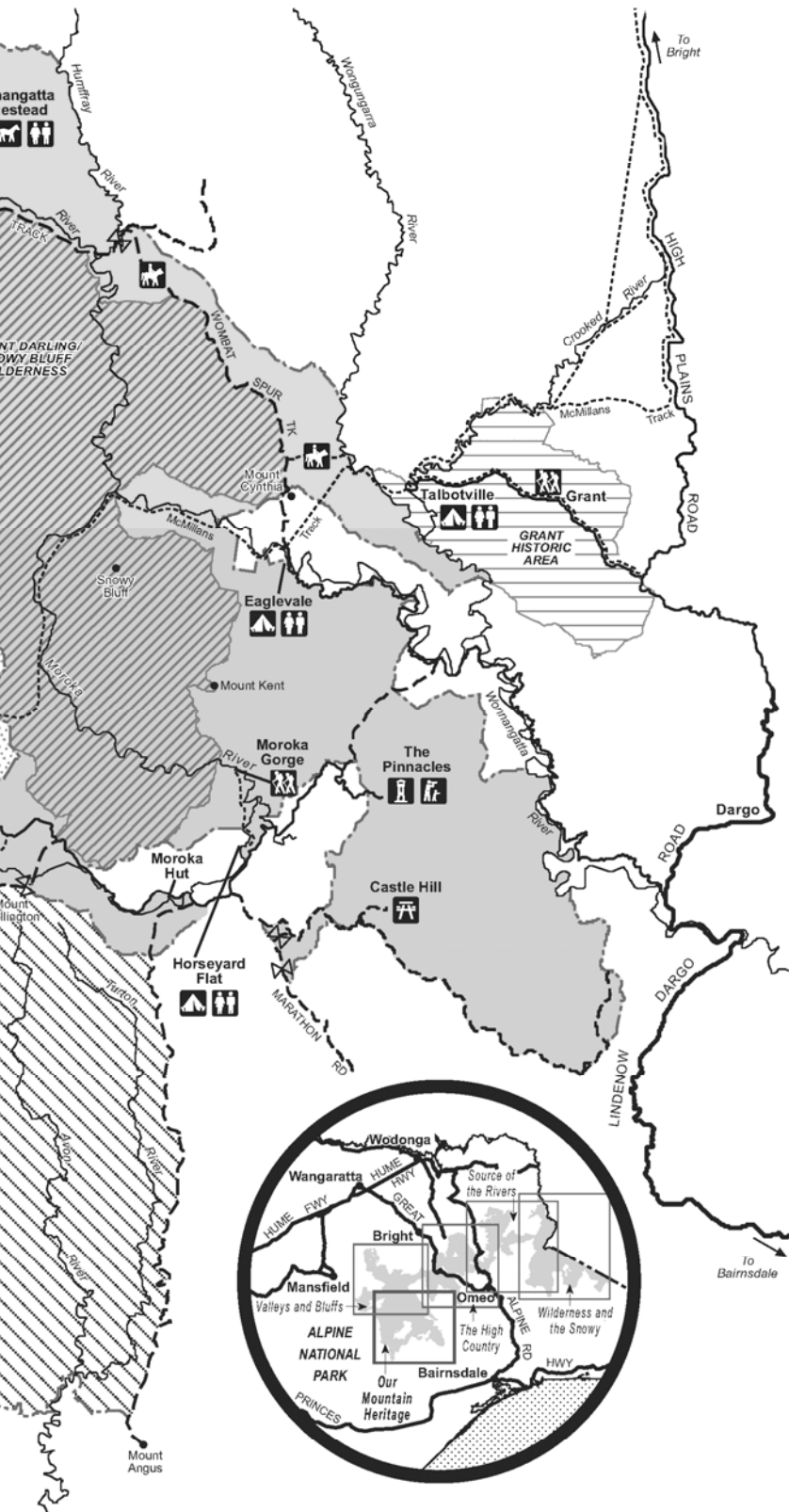
Firewood supplies are limited especially in the alpine and sub alpine areas, so the use of camping stoves is preferred. Tali Karng is a fuel stoves only area.

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.

Wilderness

The Avon, Razor - Viking, Mt Darling/Snowy Bluff wilderness areas are large areas of remote, undisturbed land with little evidence of European occupation.

There is no vehicle access into or within these areas, signposts or walking track markers. Here visitors need to be self reliant, meeting nature on its own terms.



For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre

Call 13 1963

or visit our website at

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Park Office

Licola Road, Heyfield 3858

Phone 13 1963

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

Take your rubbish home, most rubbish will not burn or rot

Dogs and other pets are not permitted

Firearms are only permitted in the park in accordance with Hunting Regulations

Choose a firm, dry, well drained camp site at least 20 metres from any watercourse

Use a portable stove instead of lighting a fire - especially above or near the tree line

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

Fuel Stove Only Area. Due to vegetation damage and visual scarring no campfires are to be lit within 1 km of Tali Karng or Vallejo Ganter Hut (Macalister Springs)

Where toilets are not provided, bury your waste at least 100 m from water or camp sites

Wash up away from streams to protect the fragile stream environment

Enjoy a visit to a hut, but do not use them for accommodation, always carry a tent

Vehicles, including trail bikes, are restricted to existing roads and tracks. Vehicles must be fully registered and drivers licensed

Please don't throw this park note away. Keep it, return it for others to use, or recycle it

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, so always be prepared with:

- warm clothing
- wind and waterproof jacket
- gloves, hat, sunglasses and strong footwear
- first aid kit and sunscreen
- energy food and water
- compass and relevant topographical map

Before you go, let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return.

Please keep to walking tracks, particularly in old gold mining areas such as Talbotville and Grant where there may be mine shafts.

Tour guides

A number of licenced tour operators run tours (4WDing, 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

Fire in the Alps

During the summer of 2006 a number of fires swept through the Australian Alps. As a result some roads and tracks have been closed in the interest of public safety. To assist with regeneration please keep to tracks and trails, especially in fire affected areas.

Plants and animals

The area contains a diversity of habitats including the alpine herbfields and subalpine woodlands of the Snowy and Howitt Plans, often associated with subalpine bogs and grassfields in cold air drainage basins.

These grasslands and woodlands are often home for mammals such as Agile and Swainsons Antechinus, Mountain Brushtail and Ringtail Possums.

Mountain Gum - Snow Gum forests often grow on more sheltered sites between 1000 and 1400 metres with a grassy or healthy understorey. Below 1000 metres the mountain slopes are dominated by bands of tall straight Alpine Ash (Woolly Butt) forests. These extensive forests include mature ash, 1939 regrowth, and regeneration from more recent timber harvesting operations and bushfires.

In the past

Aboriginal groups travelled up to the high plains in summer, finding food such as Bogong Moths and conducting ceremonies. Little visible evidence of their occupation now remains, but Aboriginal communities are researching and recovering more of their people's history.

Cattle grazing had its beginnings in the Howqua and Macalister River areas in the mid 1800s and later extended to include most of the grassy forested slopes, river flats and snow plains. Cattle no longer graze in the Alpine National Park and Wonnangatta Valley but you can sense the history by visiting the ruins of the station, home of the pioneer Bryce family for many years, and the site of an unsolved murder. Howitt Hut is also closely related to both the Wonnangatta runs and murder! There are relics of gold mining days of the 1860s and 1870s in the Grant Historic Area, adjacent to the Alpine National Park. Please be aware of mine shafts.

Loggers seeking Alpine Ash timber began cutting here in the late 1940s.

Other publications

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

Maps and books

VicMap 1:50,000 series Howitt - Selwyn, Tamboritha - Moroka, Dargo Plains - Cobungra and Crooked River

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)

Alpine National Park park notes

Our Mountain Heritage

- walks around Howitt, Snowy Ranges and Tali Karng

Valleys and Bluffs

- around Mansfield and Whitfield

Source of the Rivers

- around Mitta Mitta, Tallangatta and Corryong

The High Country

- around Bright, Mt Beauty and Omeo

Wilderness and the Snowy

- around Benambra, Buchan and Jindabyne

Horseriding in the Alpine National Park

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