

Alpine National Park



Source of the Rivers - around Mitta Mitta, Omeo, Tallangatta and Corryong

Lake Dartmouth and the Mitta Mitta River, nestled in the folds of the ranges, are the main recreational and scenic focus for the area. There are many other interesting destinations to explore like the rugged granite summit of Mount Wills, historic Glen Wills and the bush tracks that wind through tall mountain forests, along snow gum clad ridge tops or besides racing mountain streams.

Water from these pristine mountain catchments eventually reaches the Murray River, making an enormous contribution to the domestic and irrigation water available in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

Getting there and getting around

The area is about 400 km north east of Melbourne. From the north access is via the Omeo Highway past Mount Wills or over Sassafras Gap on the Corryong - Benambra Road. From the south, travel via Omeo (Omeo Highway), Benambra and the Limestone - Black Mountain Road.

Mountain roads are often unsealed, narrow and winding. Chains must be carried during the snow season and fitted where directed.

Car touring

The main attractions of Dartmouth Dam, the Mitta Mitta River, Mount Wills and Mount Benambra are accessible in a conventional 2WD car. There are many early gold and tin mining sites to explore in the Mount Wills, Mount Murphy and Cassilis Historic Areas but 4WD vehicles are generally needed to negotiate the rough tracks. Please do not remove or disturb mining relics.

A few millimetres of rain can turn a dirt track into one that is treacherous and/or impassable - even for the most experienced driver. In addition to this, considerable damage occurs to 4WD tracks when used in wet conditions.

Walking

The long distance Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes through the area on its 650 km route between Walhalla (Gippsland, Vic) and Tharwa (near Canberra, ACT).

This 'track', which at times is barely a foot pad, crosses the vein of the alpine country, climbing the higher ridges and spurs of Mount Wills, Johnnies Top and Davies Plain and plummeting into the remote valleys of Morass, Buena and Limestone Creeks.

Bushwalking along the AAWT is only for experienced walkers with navigation and self sufficiency skills.

Shorter walks can be undertaken to:

- Green Creek Historic Battery (2 km return from the Dartmouth Track),
- Harrington's Track (20 km one way) Historic bridle trail along the Murray River from Tom Groggin to Bunroy Station,
- Mount Wills (6 km return from the Omeo Highway) The rocky granite summit offers stunning alpine scenery among Snow Gums and fragrant herbfields,
- Around Taylor's Crossing Pleasant walks along the shady banks of the Mitta Mitta River,
- Near Omeo there are walks around the historic Victoria Falls and the Oriental Claims,
- The township of Mitta Mitta.

River & Deep Gully walks (3.6 km, 2 hrs return)

These two walks can be linked to make a pleasant walk along the picturesque Mitta Mitta River.

The Pioneer Mine (1.5 km, 1 hr return)

The Pioneer Claim at Mitta Mitta was reputedly the largest open cut gold mine in Victoria during its days of operation between 1859 and 1913.



Boating

Lake Dartmouth and its immediate surrounds are not part of the Alpine National Park and are managed by Goulburn - Murray Water.

A boat launching ramp is available in the Six Mile Creek area near Dartmouth.

Fishing

Fishing is a major recreation activity in the area, especially on and around Lake Dartmouth. An amateur fishing licence is required - please also check that the trout fishing season is open for the rivers and fishing bags limits are observed.

On horseback

The Bicentennial National Trail, a multi-use route (horseriding in particular) from Healesville in Victoria to Cooktown in Queensland, passes through the area.

If you are prepared for challenging and remote riding, take the trail from Omeo, skirting the Buchan Headwaters Wilderness before heading north along the Limestone Creek and Tom Groggin Tracks.

Horseriding is not permitted in Wilderness Areas and some alpine areas from May to December.

Setting up camp

Dispersed bush camping is permitted throughout the area but there are several sites where basic facilities such as a pit toilet and fireplace are provided:

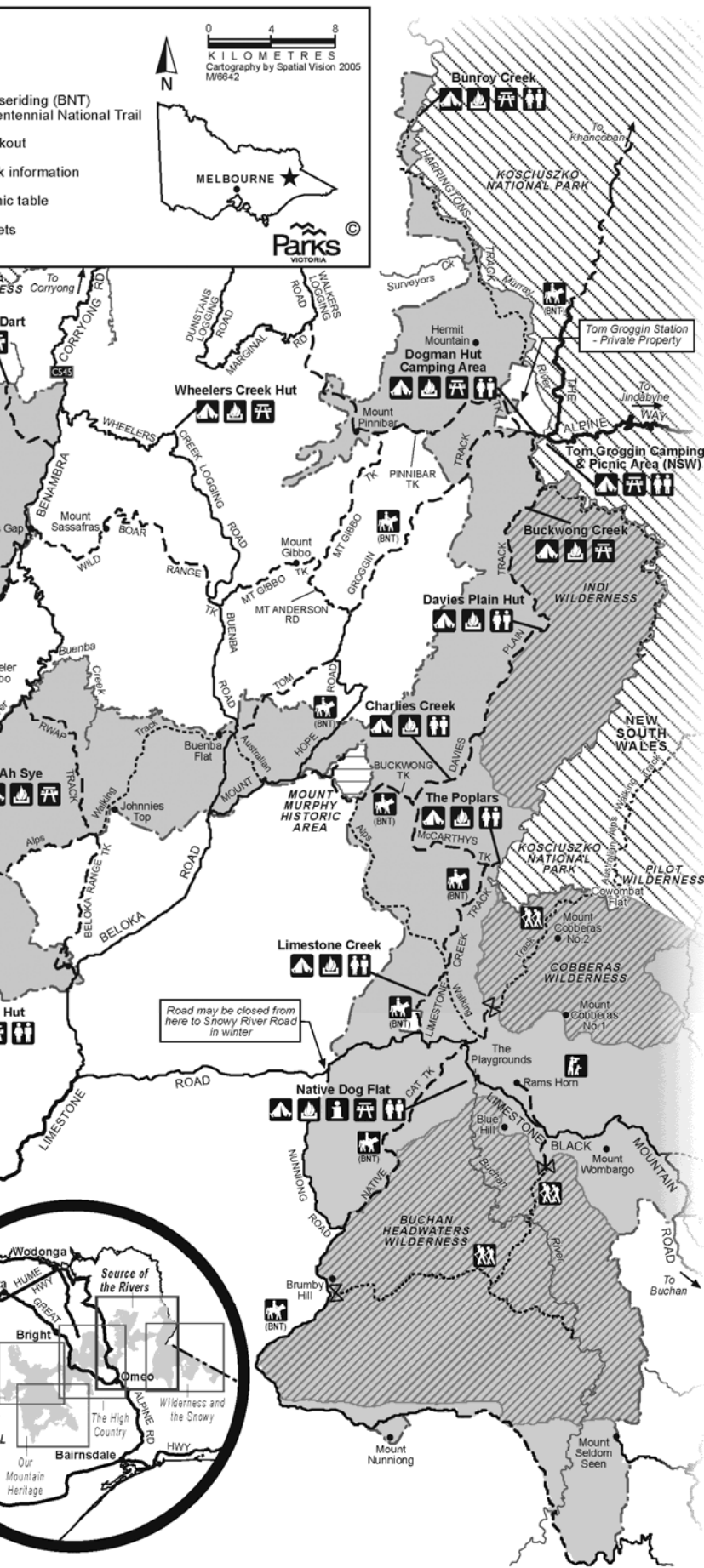
- Taylor's Crossing beside the Mitta Mitta River
- Dogman Hut, near Tom Groggin Station
- Limestone Creek, 4WD only (Limestone - Black Mountain Road)
- The Poplars, 4WD dry weather only (Limestone Creek - McCarthy's Tracks)
- Charlies Creek on the southern end of Davies Plain Track, 4WD only
- Davies Plain Hut on the northern end of Davies Plain Track, 4WD only
- Bunroy Creek on the banks of the Murray River, access via the Bunroy Road.

Along the Omeo Highway - travelling from Omeo to Mitta Mitta there is:

- CRB Camp near Anglers Rest
- Anglers Rest near the historic 'Blue Duck' hotel
- Jokers Flat beside the Big River
- Big River Bridge near Glen Valley

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





Take care!

When driving through the park please remember:

- check road conditions and river crossing levels before starting out.
- vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public. Public vehicles are not permitted in Wilderness Areas.
- many roads and tracks are closed seasonally for environmental and safety reasons.

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

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



Tour guides

A number of licenced tour operators run tours (4WDing, walking, horseriding and rafting) in the 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.

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre
Call 13 1963

or visit our website at
www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Tallangatta Park Office
34 Towong Street
Tallangatta Vic 3700

Omeo Park Office
Day Avenue
Omeo Vic 3989
Phone 13 1963

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

All native plants, animals, archaeological and historic sites are protected by law. Please do not disturb them in any way

Take any rubbish home

Dogs, cats and other pets are prohibited within the park

Dogs on leads are permitted at Big River Bridge, Victoria Falls and Oriental Claims Historic Areas

Firearms, generators and chainsaws are prohibited

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

Use of vehicles, including trail bikes, is restricted to existing roads and tracks. All vehicles must be fully registered and drivers licensed

Fires may only be lit in fireplaces provided

No fires (including stoves) may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban (East Gippsland and North-East Fire Ban Districts)

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

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

In the past

Aboriginal presence in the area can be traced back at least 4000 years. It is believed that the Jaithmathang were the largest tribe, inhabiting large areas of the north eastern Alps including the Mitta Mitta and Gibbo Rivers. 'Sub tribes' of the Jaithmathang were the Kandagora-mittung, who occupied the Mitta Mitta area.

The tribes inhabited the lower plains and valleys for most of the year, but visited the high plateaus during the warmer months to hold ceremonies and feast on protein rich Bogong moths.

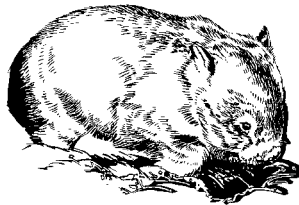
The first European contact with this area was as early as 1835 when James McFarlane travelled down from the Monaro region of NSW with George McKillop. He returned a few years later to establish Omeo Station. In 1840 the search for new grazing land led Count Strzelecki to explore the Omeo area from a different direction - south of the Murray.

Gold was discovered in the 1850s in the Mount Wills area and in 1888 major reserves of tin ore were also found. Other goldfields were later discovered in the Dart (formerly Dark River), Green Creek, Zulu Creek and Gibbo River areas. In 1890 the tungsten ore wolfram (used to reinforce steel) was discovered at Mount Murphy. As in many old mining areas, remains of machinery, tram tracks, tunnels and heaps of ore give a fascinating insight into our mining history.

Plants and animals

The area's forests protect habitats for many species including the Red-necked and Black Wallaby, Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Brown Antechinus, Dingo and Bush Rat.

Possums include Greater, Sugar and Feather-tail Gliders and the more common Brush-tail and Ringtail Possums.



Common Wombat © MT

Wombats are common throughout the area, from the valleys to the mountaintops.

There is also a great diversity of birds including Crimson Rosellas, Gang-gang Cockatoos, Superb Lyrebirds, Wonga Pigeons and Grey Fantails.

Higher up the mountains, bands of tall montane forest of Alpine Ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) eventually give way to small areas of Snow Gum woodland on the highest ridges and summits.



*Open peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata* & *E. dives*) and riparian forests (beautiful white 'gum' barked *E. rubida*, *E. viminalis* & *E. camphora*) cover most of the area*

Other publications

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

Maps

Spatial Vision Touring the Victorian Alps
1:140,000

VicMap 1:50,000 Omeo - Bindi, Benambra - Leinster, Dart - Gibbo, Alpine Area (Leisure Map)

Natmap 1:100,000 Benambra and Jacobs River

Alpine National Park park notes

Our Mountain Heritage

- around Heyfield, Licola and Dargo

Valleys and Bluffs

- around Mansfield and Whitfield

The High Country

- around Bright, Mt Beauty and Omeo

Wilderness and Snowy

- around Benambra, Buchan and Bonang

Horseriding in the Alpine National Park

Books

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

Victoria's National Parks Explorer's Guide (See Australia Guides)

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